

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 1601

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
Environmental Health, Select

**Title:** An act relating to the children's environmental health and protection advisory council.

**Brief Description:** Creating the children's environmental health and protection advisory council.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Rolfes, Campbell, Chase, Hudgins, Hunt, Morrell, Upthegrove, McCoy, Santos, Dickerson, Hasegawa, Sells, Schual-Berke, Wood and Simpson.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Select Committee on Environmental Health: 2/8/07, 2/15/07 [DPS].

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill**

- Creates the Children's Environmental Health and Protection Advisory Council.

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### HOUSE SELECT COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

**Majority Report:** The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Campbell, Chair; Hudgins, Vice Chair; Newhouse, Ranking Minority Member; Sump, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Chase, Hailey, Hunt, Morrell and Wood.

**Staff:** Amy McCormick (786-7290).

**Background:**

Studies have shown that children are more susceptible and more exposed to environmental hazards than adults. Children are particularly vulnerable to such hazards as lead, pesticides, air pollutants, contaminated water, toxic waste, secondhand tobacco smoke, and industrial and home chemicals. As children's bodies and biological systems develop, they are uniquely vulnerable to damage from toxic substances. Children are also more exposed to toxins from the environment, as well as school and homes. Proportional to body weight, children take in far higher concentrations of toxins in the environment than adults.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

**Summary of Substitute Bill:**

The Children's Environmental Health and Protection Advisory Council (Council) is created. Membership of the council consists of 16 people, including members of the Legislature, representatives of several state agencies, a tribal representative, a licensed pediatric health care provider with expertise in the field of children's environmental health, a parent whose child has been diagnosed with exposure to an environmental health hazard, a representative from the academic community involved in research on environmental toxins and human exposure, and an expert in the field of human toxicology.

The Council must review and comment on existing laws, rules, regulations, and standards to ensure adequate protection of children's health from environmental hazards, both in Washington and in other states. The Council must also review current research on environmental toxins and exposures, children's environmental health and other research relevant to the protection of children's health from environmental hazards. The State Board of Health must provide staff support to the Council.

The Council must report to the Governor and the Legislature by December 1, 2007, and December 1, 2008, with recommendations of changes in regulation that would reduce children's exposure to environmental hazards and recommendations for collaborative approaches to public education.

The Council must collaborate and coordinate its activities with the Pesticide Incident Reporting and Tracking Review Panel to ensure that the panel's activities are not duplicated.

The act expires June 30, 2009.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:**

The substitute adds a representative from the academic community involved in research on environmental toxins and exposures to the Council. The substitute adds requirements that the Council review laws and rules of other states, as well as current research on environmental toxins, regarding children's environmental health. The substitute requires the Council to collaborate and coordinate its activities with the Pesticide Incident Reporting and Tracking Review Panel.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date of Substitute Bill:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) We have become increasingly aware of environmental health hazards for our children. Children have more exposure to hazards than adults, and children encounter toxics

in schools, backyards and communities. Children often have different and more severe effects than adults in response to chemical exposure. Incidence of autism and other emotional or behavioral abnormalities is growing in our school children, and environmental toxins are suspected of being the cause. Environmental toxins are a greater threat to children in poverty than others. We have overexposure to chemicals and the least we should do is look and see if there's any additional action we should take to reduce children's exposure to toxic chemicals. There's a lot of discussion but not a lot of thoughtful consideration or contemplation as to what the biggest risks are and how we should address them. A variety of policymaking bodies are making rules that will protect our children and the adults working in the same areas. A council that will review existing legislation will provide good guidance to the Legislature and other agencies. We would benefit from an interdisciplinary coordinated approach to children's environmental health, and legislators would benefit from having a stakeholder group committed to these issues.

(With concerns) With respect to pesticides, we already have in place a government entity that does what this bill does. The Pesticide Incident Reporting and Tracking Review Panel does the same thing and has worked specifically on children's issues. We cannot afford duplicate efforts and so we should avoid any duplication of the same work by two different entities.

**Persons Testifying:** (In support) Ruth Shearer; Lucinda Young, Washington Education Association; and Steve Zemke, Taxpayers For Washington's Future.

(With concerns) Heather Hansen, Washington Friends of Farms and Forests; and Dan Coyne, Farwest Agribusiness Association.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.