

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2581

As Reported by House Committee On:
Environmental Health, Select

Title: An act relating to developing a statewide radiological baseline.

Brief Description: Developing a statewide radiological baseline.

Sponsors: Representatives Hudgins and Chase.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Select Committee on Environmental Health: 1/29/08, 1/30/08 [DP].

<p>Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Requires the Department of Health to establish a statewide radiological baseline.

HOUSE SELECT COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 8 members: Representatives Campbell, Chair; Hudgins, Vice Chair; Sump, Ranking Minority Member; Chase, Hunt, Morrell, Newhouse and Wood.

Staff: Ashley Pedersen (786-7303).

Background:

The Department of Health (DOH) is designated in statute as the State Radiation Control Agency. Within the DOH, the Office of Radiation Protection is responsible for duties relating to radioactive waste surveillance, environmental monitoring of radiation, and monitoring public health uses of radiation.

The Legislature mandated additional responsibilities relating to Radiation Control in 1985. These included a statewide radiological baseline, an independent statewide monitoring program, comprehensive environmental monitoring programs, as well as data collection and research on diseases caused by ionizing radiation. The DOH has already begun development of a statewide radiological baseline, but needs additional funding to complete the statewide baseline.

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 Bill:

The DOH is required to continue development of a statewide radiological baseline. The DOH must establish radiological baselines for Bellingham, Ellensburg, Olympia, Port Angeles, Seattle, Spokane, Tacoma, Vancouver, Wenatchee, and Yakima.

The baselines must include taking at least 30 radiological measurements per city listed above. The DOH must prepare a report and place the report online for public availability by January 1, 2009. The report must include an analysis of the data obtained, a summary of the findings, and an interpretation of the findings.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 25, 2008.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed. However, the bill is null and void if not funded in the budget.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Establishing statewide radiological baselines is a needed element of the Environmental Health Division of the DOH program. Without a specific effort to do this, the DOH could not get this done because they are fee-supported and do not have the funds. If there is ever an incident, either accidental or intentional, that releases radiological materials into the state, the baseline is needed to determine how much radiation has been added. In addition, the baseline information would provide decision-makers with the information they need to take the best protective actions. There are variations in radiation levels across the state and the cities in the bill are good choices because of their population size and location. The areas of King, Snohomish and Pierce County rank in the U. S. Department of Homeland Security's top 10 list as likely sites for an intentional release of radiation.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Hudgins, prime sponsor; Gregg Grunenfelder, Department of Health; and Eric Johnson, Washington Association of Counties.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.