

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 3167

As Reported by House Committee On:
Environmental Health, Select

Title: An act relating to evaluating environmental health conditions in state office buildings.

Brief Description: Evaluating environmental health conditions in state office buildings.

Sponsors: Representatives Hunt, Campbell, Hudgins, Dickerson, Chase, Williams and McIntire.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Select Committee on Environmental Health: 1/30/08, 2/5/08 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires the Department of Health (DOH) to convene and chair a work group to study approaches and techniques that are effective at minimizing the potential for adverse environmental health effects on occupants of state office buildings with recommendations to be presented to the Governor and Legislature by December 1, 2009.
- Requires the DOH to conduct an indoor environmental quality pilot study in the Olympia area of at least two state-owned office buildings and at least one privately-owned office building leased and occupied by state offices.
- Requires a water quality sampling study to be conducted by the DOH to test the tap water at two state-owned and one privately-owned office building leased and occupied by state offices.
- Adds the requirement to determine which state-owned or leased offices provide bottled water and provide recommendations to minimize the purchase of bottled water.

HOUSE SELECT COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

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.

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 8 members: Representatives Campbell, Chair; Hudgins, Vice Chair; Sump, Ranking Minority Member; Chase, Hunt, Morrell, Newhouse and Wood.

Staff: Brad Avy (786-7289).

Background:

In the office setting there are an increasing number of chemicals in addition to biological contaminants that can affect the health of individuals working in the indoor environment.

Indoor contaminants may include radon, asbestos, volatile organic chemicals; combustion byproducts including carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides and carbon dioxide; metals and gases including lead, chlorine, and ozone; respirable particles, and other contaminants.

In some circumstances, exposure to these substances may cause adverse health effects, including respiratory illnesses, multiple chemical sensitivities, skin and eye irritations, headaches, and other related symptoms.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The Department of Health (DOH), in consultation with the Department of General Administration (GA) and the Department of Labor and Industries (L&I), must convene and chair a work group to study approaches and techniques that are effective at minimizing the potential for adverse environmental health effects on occupants of state office buildings.

The Secretary of the DOH must establish the work group and include representatives from the:

- Department of General Administration;
- Department of Labor and Industries;
- State Building Code Council;
- agency representatives of small, mid-size, and large facilities;
- state employee unions;
- industry representatives (including a professional trade association); and
- other stakeholders.

The DOH must also conduct a pilot study in the Olympia area of at least two state-owned office buildings and at least one privately-owned office building leased by the state. The purpose of the study is to measure and monitor indoor air quality and general building conditions as they relate to an evaluation of potential environmental hazards that may negatively impact working conditions.

A water quality sampling study must be conducted by the DOH to test the tap water at two state-owned and one privately-owned office building leased and occupied by state offices.

The DOH must determine which state owned or leased offices provide bottled water and provide recommendations to minimize the purchase of bottled water.

The work group must make recommendations on practical and cost-effective opportunities to minimize the potential for adverse health effects on building occupants of state facilities.

Recommendations must be presented in a report to the Governor and to the appropriate committees of the Legislature by December 1, 2009.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill:

- includes the requirement that the DOH consult with the GA and L&I in convening the work group;
- adds a representative from a professional trade association in the Olympia area that represents professional developers and owners of office buildings leased to the state;
- removes the definition of "state office building;"
- removes specific environmental quality considerations and replaces language referencing an evaluation of potential environmental hazards;
- removes the requirement to test drinking water in all state office buildings;
- removes the limitation on state agencies' purchase of bottled water;
- removes the requirement that any savings obtained be directed toward funding the act;
- adds a water quality sampling study to be conducted by the DOH to test the tap water at two state-owned and one privately-owned office building leased and occupied by state offices;
- adds the requirement to determine which state owned or leased offices provide bottled water and provide recommendations to minimize the purchase of bottled water; and
- adds a year to the timeline for presenting the report to the Governor and the Legislature.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on substitute bill on February 5, 2008.

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) None.

(With concerns) The environment in buildings can affect health. There are concerns with the bill about the very broad scope of all the things that would need to be looked at in a very short time frame to complete a report. The bill can be narrowed to something that can be achieved this year and still address some of the key issues in the indoor environment. Doing drinking water testing in all state buildings for both quality and taste would have a very large fiscal note given that there are 3,100 state buildings. Taste is something very subjective that will need to be sorted out.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: (With concerns) Gregg Grunenfelder, Department of Health.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.