
**Technology, Energy &
Communications Committee**

HB 1478

Brief Description: Regarding the authorities of the Washington utilities and transportation commission relative to the requirement imposed upon gas and hazardous liquid pipelines under RCW 81.88.080.

Sponsors: Representatives Morris, Crouse, Takko, McCoy, McCune, Kenney, Linville and Dunn.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission to provide certain types of pipeline data to first responders.
- Exempts from public records disclosure certain pipeline location information.

Hearing Date: 1/31/07

Staff: Kara Durbin (786-7133).

Background:

The Public Disclosure Act requires all state and local government agencies to make all public records available for public inspection and copying unless the records lie within specific statutory exemptions. The provisions that require public records disclosure must be interpreted liberally and the exceptions narrowly in order to effect a general policy that supports disclosure.

The Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (WUTC) regulates the rates, services, and practices of privately owned utilities and transportation companies. In 2000, the Legislature passed the Pipeline Safety Act (PSA), which requires the WUTC to collect location information and maps of pipelines from hazardous liquid pipeline companies and gas pipeline companies with interstate pipelines, commercial gas pipelines, or gas transmission pipelines.

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.

Additionally, the PSA requires the WUTC to evaluate and consolidate the information and maps received into a statewide geographic information system (GIS). The GIS is made available to one-number locator services, which are services through which a person may request field-marking of underground facilities.

Summary of Bill:

The Pipeline Safety Act (PSA) is amended. The Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (WUTC) must provide any data it develops or gathers for the statewide geographic information system (GIS) to state agencies, local governments, and first responders. The term "first responders" refers to firefighters and law enforcement personnel.

Upon request, the commission shall make available for public inspection and copying any maps or map images that illustrate line pipe location of no greater detail than a scale of 1:24,000. Such information is not exempt from public disclosure.

Location information and maps of pipelines gathered or developed by the WUTC in creating the statewide GIS is exempt from public disclosure. Pipeline maps or pipeline geographic information filed with the WUTC is also exempt.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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