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**Public Safety & Emergency  
Preparedness Committee**

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**HB 1675**

**Brief Description:** Providing certain public notices in a language other than English.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Santos, Curtis, McDermott, Williams, Upthegrove, Hasegawa, Roberts, Schual-Berke, Simpson and Darneille.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Requires state agencies to provide public notices regarding public health, safety, or welfare risks in a language other than English if 5 percent or more of the residents residing in the affected community are individuals with limited English proficiency.

**Hearing Date:** 2/5/07

**Staff:** Alison Hellberg (786-7152).

**Background:**

Many state and local agencies are required to provide services and materials in languages other than English to individuals with limited English proficiency. Other agencies, although not required, make efforts to provide some services and materials in languages other than English.

Individuals with limited English proficiency involved in legal proceedings must be provided with interpreters. The Administrative Office of the Courts must prepare and make available written information regarding the protection order process, sexual assault, and domestic violence.

When an individual with limited English proficiency is a party in an adjudicative proceeding, the agency is required to write all notices concerning the hearing in the primary language of the party. A notice must also include information on how the party may get assistance in understanding and responding to the notice. A qualified interpreter must be provided to a party during a hearing.

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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.*

Under the Worker and Community Right to Know Act (Know Act), the Department of Labor and Industries must prepare and make available to employers or the public a translation in any of the five most common languages other than English used in the workplace of written materials regarding safety and hazard communication standards. Under the Know Act, employers who employ individuals with limited English proficiency are to make reasonable efforts to post notices in employees' native languages.

Section 203 of the federal Voting Rights Act requires a state or political subdivision to offer "voting materials" in minority languages within four language groups: American Indian, Asian American, Alaskan native, or Spanish heritage. This law applies if more than 10,000 or over 5 percent of the total voting age citizens in a county are members of a single minority language group and are limited in English proficiency. In Washington, four counties are required to provide voting materials in additional languages: Adams, Franklin, and Yakima counties must provide voting materials in Spanish, and King County must provide materials in Chinese.

**Summary of Bill:**

State agencies must provide public notices regarding public health, safety, or welfare risks in languages other than English when a significant segment of the affected community speaks a language other than English and has a limited proficiency in English. "Significant segment" is defined as 5 percent or more of the residents residing in the affected city, town, or county who are of limited English proficiency.

This requirement applies to proposed locations for criminal facilities or facilities that would house sex offenders. This requirement does not apply to the adoption of rules under the Administrative Procedures Act.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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