

FINAL BILL REPORT

SB 6753

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Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Regarding changes in calling burn bans for solid fuel burning devices.

Sponsors: Senators Fraser, Swecker, Rockefeller and Pridemore.

Senate Committee on Water, Energy & Telecommunications

House Committee on Select Committee on Environmental Health

Background: Nearly half of Washington's households have wood burning devices. Wood burning units can emit hundreds of times more pollution than other forms of heat such as natural gas, electricity, or oil. Since 1997 all fireplaces offered for sale in Washington must meet certification standards comparable to wood stove standards. Masonry fireplaces must also meet design standards that achieve similar emission reductions. The State Building Code Council devised fireplace construction standards and testing methods to meet this emission requirement. In September 2006 the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency revised national air quality standards for fine particle pollution to particles 2.5 micrometers in diameter and smaller. The previous daily fine particle standard was 65 micrograms of particles per cubic meter to 35 micrograms of particles per cubic meter of air. This standard was changed to protect public health from short-term exposure to fine particles. Some communities are unable to meet the new standard, primarily because of wood smoke emissions. In 2007 the Department of Ecology (Ecology) was charged with convening a work group to study the impacts of wood smoke from solid fuel burning devices on communities in Washington. This work group provided recommendations to the Legislature on practical and cost-effective opportunities to reduce exposure to wood smoke from solid fuel burning devices, and meet the new national air quality standards for fine particulates.

Summary: Ecology or a local air pollution control authority may call a first stage burn ban when forecasted meteorological conditions are predicted to cause fine particulate levels to exceed 35 micrograms per cubic meter as measured on a 24-hour basis.

Ecology or a local air pollution control authority may call a second stage burn ban when a first stage burn ban has been in force and has not been sufficient to reduce fine particulate levels below 25 micrograms per cubic meter over a 24-hour period, and forecasted meteorological conditions are not expected to allow fine particulate levels to decline below 25 micrograms per cubic meter for a 24-hour period or longer.

Ecology or a local air pollution control authority may call a second stage burn ban without calling a first stage burn ban when all of the following occur: (1) fine particulate levels have reached or exceeded 25 micrograms per cubic meter over a 24-hour period; (2) meteorological conditions have caused fine particulate levels to rise rapidly; (3) meteorological conditions are predicted to cause fine particulate levels to exceed 35 micrograms per cubic meter as measured on a 24-hour basis; and (4) meteorological conditions are highly likely to prevent sufficient dispersion of fine particulates.

When Ecology or a local air pollution control authority calls a second stage burn ban without calling a first stage burn ban, Ecology or the local air pollution control authority calling the second stage burn ban must prepare a report describing: (1) the meteorological conditions that resulted in calling the second stage burn ban; (2) whether the agency could have taken actions to avoid calling a second stage burn ban without calling a first stage burn ban; and (3) any changes the department or authority is making to its procedures of calling first stage and second stage burn bans to avoid calling a second stage burn ban without first calling a first stage burn ban.

Ecology and local air pollution control authorities must evaluate the effectiveness of state burn ban programs and provide a joint report to the Legislature by September 1, 2011.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	48	0
House	93	0

Effective: June 12, 2008