

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SHB 1135

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As Reported by Senate Committee On:  
Environment, Water & Energy, March 16, 2011

**Title:** An act relating to refrigerants for motor vehicles.

**Brief Description:** Regarding refrigerants for motor vehicles.

**Sponsors:** House Committee on Environment (originally sponsored by Representatives Finn, Armstrong and Upthegrove).

**Brief History:** Passed House: 3/05/11, 93-4.

**Committee Activity:** Environment, Water & Energy: 3/15/11, 3/16/11 [DP, DNP].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT, WATER & ENERGY

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Rockefeller, Chair; Nelson, Vice Chair; Fraser, Holmquist Newbry and Ranker.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Honeyford, Ranking Minority Member; Delvin and Morton.

**Staff:** Jan Odano (786-7486)

**Background:** Air conditioning equipment is defined in statute as mechanical vapor compression refrigeration equipment that is used to cool the driver or passenger compartment of any motor vehicle. Currently, air conditioning equipment may not contain any refrigerant that is toxic or flammable, unless the refrigerant is included in the list published by the Environmental Protection Act (EPA) as a safe alternative motor vehicle air conditioning substitute for chlorofluorocarbon-12. The Washington State Patrol (WSP) may adopt and enforce safety requirements and regulations for motor vehicle air conditioning equipment which must correlate with and conform to the current recommended practice or standard approved by the Society of Automotive Engineers.

Under the federal Clean Air Act, states have the option to implement either federal motor vehicle emission standards or California motor vehicle emissions standards for passenger cars, light-duty trucks, and medium-duty passenger vehicles. In 2005 the Legislature adopted

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California motor vehicle emissions standards and authorized the Department of Ecology (Department) to adopt rules to implement these emissions standards.

**Summary of Bill:** Air conditioning equipment may not contain any refrigerant that is toxic or flammable, unless the refrigerant is allowed under motor vehicle emission standards rules adopted by the Department.

No one may sell or equip a new vehicle with air conditioning that doesn't comply with the Department rules.

The provision allowing the WSP to adopt safety requirements and regulations applicable to motor vehicle air conditioning equipment is removed.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: In 2009 the Legislature specifically referenced a published EPA list of approved alternatives that could be used in Washington State. This bill will enable the state to accept the products approved by EPA without having to come to the Legislature to update the statute. The old product would remain in the atmosphere for 13 years, but the new product remains for just 11 days. This is especially good for the environment.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Sandy Swarthout, Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers.