

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6369

As of January 31, 2012

Title: An act relating to protecting environmental quality and human health.

Brief Description: Protecting environmental quality and human health.

Sponsors: Senators Chase and Shin.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Environment: 2/01/12.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT

Staff: Jan Odano (786-7486)

Background: The purpose of the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) is to declare state policy that promotes efforts to prevent or eliminate damage to the environment, stimulate the health and welfare of people, and to enrich the understanding of ecological systems and natural resources important to the state. SEPA directs state and local agencies to identify and evaluate the environmental impacts that may result from their decisions. These decisions may be in regards to issuing permits for private projects, constructing public facilities, or the development of regulations, policies or plans.

SEPA sets guidelines for agencies to follow in their decision-making. The guidelines include requirements such as using a systematic and interdisciplinary approach; ensuring unquantified environmental amenities and values are given appropriate consideration along with economic and technical consideration during decision-making; a statement on the environmental impact, adverse environmental effects, alternatives and irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources in the proposed action; and initiating and using ecological information when planning and developing natural resource-oriented projects.

Summary of Bill: The SEPA guidelines include that the lack of scientific certainty is not sufficient reason for the state to postpone cost-effective measure to prevent serious or irreversible damage to human health or the environment.

The term environment is defined to include physical, mental, economic, and social well-being of human health, not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

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.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 26, 2012.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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