
Environment Committee

HB 2294

Brief Description: Increasing penalties for littering.

Sponsors: Representatives Pike, Wylie, Stonier, Vick, Harris, Blake, Farrell, Moeller, Fitzgibbon, Sawyer, Bergquist and Pollet.

<p>Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increases the penalties for littering in small amounts to \$125, up from \$50.
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Hearing Date: 1/29/14

Staff: Jacob Lipson (786-7196).

Background:

The Waste Reduction, Recycling, and Litter Control Act (Act), dating to 1971, establishes statewide programs to prevent and clean up litter, reduce waste, and increase recycling. The Act also prohibits littering on state and private lands not owned by the litterer. The Act vests police powers to enforce restrictions on littering with a variety of government personnel, including Department of Ecology and State Parks and Recreation Commission employees, local government agencies with law enforcement capabilities, state patrol officers, fish and wildlife officers, fire wardens, and forest rangers.

Littering in an amount equal to less than one cubic foot is designated as a class 3 civil infraction, which means the violator is subject to base penalties of up to \$50, with the exception of potentially dangerous litter like cigarettes, glass, and raw human waste, which is subject to heightened penalties. Additional fees and assessments are also applied to the base penalty for class 3 civil infractions. Littering in larger volumes subjects a violator to criminal misdemeanor penalties.

In addition, state traffic laws prohibit dropping materials onto highways, which is an infraction punishable with a base penalty of \$87.

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.

Summary of Bill:

Littering in an amount smaller than one cubic foot is raised to a class 2 civil infraction that subjects the violator to a penalty of up to \$125, plus additional fees and assessments. This littering penalty is assessed separately from the \$87 base penalty for dropping materials onto state highways.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 22, 2014.

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