
Public Safety Committee

HB 1698

Brief Description: Concerning enhancing public health and safety by implementing emergency preparedness guidance measures related to oil train accidents.

Sponsors: Representatives Kilduff, Muri, Farrell, Riccelli, Robinson, Jinkins, Senn, Fey, Macri, Tarleton, Pollet and Stanford.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Directs the Department of Health to develop emergency preparedness guidance for oil train accidents and associated hazards, and to implement a public awareness and outreach program in collaboration with local officials and entities in localities through which oil trains travel.

Hearing Date: 2/13/17

Staff: Omeara Harrington (786-7136).

Background:

Oil Transportation by Rail.

Oil, including crude oil and refined petroleum products, is sometimes transported by vessel, pipeline, or train between the point of extraction, processing facilities, and other destinations. Oil transported by rail is carried in individual tank cars. Oil-carrying tank cars may comprise part or all of the cargo of a train.

The 2014 Supplemental Operating Budget directed the Department of Ecology (ECY) to submit a report to the Legislature regarding the transportation of oil through the state. The report, conducted in consultation with the Utilities and Transportation Commission, the Department of Transportation, the Military Department's Emergency Management Division (EMD), tribes, and a variety of stakeholders, analyzed the risks to public health and safety and the environmental impacts of oil transportation in Washington. Public health and safety risks identified and analyzed in the report included: fires and explosions, wildfires, crossing accidents, drinking

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.

water contamination, and air quality issues associated with emissions and vapor release, among other risk factors.

The ECY is in the process of providing equipment and training grants to emergency first responders to bolster basic response resources for oil spills and hazardous materials incidents.

Department of Health Emergency Preparedness Guidance.

The Office of Emergency Preparedness and Response within the Department of Health (DOH) focuses on improving the ability to respond to large-scale public health emergencies or mass casualty incidents. The DOH maintains emergency preparedness guidance on various topics, including bad weather, bioterrorism, disease outbreaks, floods, and power outages. Though some of the DOH's emergency preparedness guidance may apply in the event of an oil train accident, it does not have guidance specific to oil train accidents.

Local Emergency Planning Committees.

Washington has 43 Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPCs). All LEPCs must, at a minimum, include local officials including police, fire, civil defense, public health, transportation, and environmental professionals, as well as representatives of facilities subject to emergency planning requirements, community groups, and the media.

Each LEPC must develop an emergency response plan and review it at least annually. Among other requirements, emergency response plans must identify the transportation routes of extremely hazardous substances. In accordance with federal and state law, LEPCs must submit their emergency response plans to the EMD. The EMD coordinates a review of the plans with assistance of the ECY, the Washington State Patrol, and the DOH.

Summary of Bill:

The DOH must create emergency preparedness guidance for oil train accidents and directly associated hazards, including, but not limited to, explosions, fires, spills, decreased water quality, and other known public health risks. The emergency preparedness guidance must establish:

- effective methods of notifying citizens of an oil train accident and any associated hazardous conditions;
- information targeted to the public describing the health risks of the hazardous conditions commonly associated with oil train accidents; and
- guidance on what citizens should do in the event of hazardous conditions created by an oil train accident.

The emergency preparedness guidance must be completed by December 1, 2018, and maintained on the DOH website.

No later than January 1, 2020, the DOH must implement a public awareness and education outreach program. The purpose of the program is to increase awareness among individual citizens and local communities of potential hazards associated with oil train accidents and of appropriate response measures should an accident occur.

In developing the emergency preparedness guidance and in delivering the public awareness and education outreach program, the DOH must consult with local city and county officials, local

public health authorities, and local first responders, including LEPCs, in localities through which oil trains travel.

The DOH must report to the Legislature by December 1 of each year, through the year 2020, regarding its progress.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 10, 2017.

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