

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 5627

As Reported by House Committee On: Labor & Workplace Standards

Title: An act relating to creating the healthy energy work group to develop the healthy energy workers board.

Brief Description: Creating the healthy energy work group to develop the healthy energy workers board.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Labor & Commerce (originally sponsored by Senators Brown and Keiser).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Labor & Workplace Standards: 3/18/19, 3/21/19 [DP].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Creates the Healthy Energy Work Group in order to develop the Healthy Energy Workers Board to address chemical exposure to tank farm vapors.
- Requires a report to the Legislature from the group by December 31, 2019.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LABOR & WORKPLACE STANDARDS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Sells, Chair; Chapman, Vice Chair; Mosbrucker, Ranking Minority Member; Chandler, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Gregerson, Hoff and Ormsby.

Staff: Lily Smith (786-7175).

Background:

The Hanford site in Benton County contains a number of United States Department of Energy (DOE) facilities used to produce plutonium for atomic weapons between 1943 and 1987. Tank farms are one type of facility at the Hanford site. The tank farms are a series of underground tanks containing radioactive chemical waste products that were used in the

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process of retrieving plutonium. The tanks are vented to prevent the buildup of potentially flammable gases.

Summary of Bill:

Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated, the Healthy Energy Work Group (work group) is created. The purpose of the work group is to develop the Healthy Energy Workers Board (board) to address chemical exposure to tank farm vapors at the Hanford site.

The Governor must appoint the following members to the work group:

- the Director of the Department of Labor and Industries or designee;
- the Secretary of the Department of Health or designee;
- a representative of Harborview Medical Center;
- a representative of the University of Washington (UW) Department of Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences;
- a representative of the DOE Richland Operations Office;
- a training director for construction safety and health at the Volpentest Hazardous Materials Management and Emergency Response Federal Training Facility in Richland;
- a representative of the Central Washington Building Construction Trades Council;
- a representative of the Hanford Atomic Metal Trades Council;
- a representative of the Washington State Building and Construction Trades Council;
- and
- a representative of Plumbers and Steamfitters Local Union 598.

The UW Department of Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences must provide administrative support to the work group. The first meeting must be in person and subsequent meetings may be over audio and/or video conferencing. In addition to the initial meeting, the work group must meet no less than four times and no more than six times in 2019.

The work group must provide a report to the Legislature by December 1, 2019, regarding the development of the board, including recommendations for its membership and any draft legislation.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) It is important to get experts with specific expertise in caring for individuals affected by tank farm vapors working on this issue. Often these individuals are released from a doctor's office after exposure and without knowledge of potential long-term effects. The institutions tasked with providing support for the group have the necessary expertise and are willing to help.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Senator Brown, prime sponsor; and Morgan Hickel, University of Washington Harborview Medical Center.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.