

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6557

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As Reported by Senate Committee On:  
Environment, Water & Energy, February 3, 2010

**Title:** An act relating to limiting the use of certain substances in brake friction material.

**Brief Description:** Limiting the use of copper and other substances in vehicle brake pads.

**Sponsors:** Senators Ranker, Swecker, Rockefeller, Brandland, Brown, Kohl-Welles, Shin, Fraser and Kline; by request of Department of Ecology and Puget Sound Partnership.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Environment, Water & Energy: 1/22/10, 2/03/10 [DPS, DNP].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT, WATER & ENERGY

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6557 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Rockefeller, Chair; Pridemore, Vice Chair; Fraser, Marr, Oemig, Ranker and Sheldon.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass.

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

**Staff:** Sam Thompson (786-7413)

**Background:** Motor vehicle brakes contain brake pads designed to retard or stop movement of a motor vehicle through friction against a rotor. Brake pads may include several substances, including copper and other metals. Operation of brake pads generates dust containing these substances. Brake pad dust has been identified as a significant source of copper in the environment. High copper levels are toxic to aquatic life, including salmon.

**Summary of Bill (Recommended Substitute):** Sale of brake pads (pads) in Washington containing certain substances is banned on a phased-in basis. Requirements generally apply to all pads, except:

- pads in brakes designed to hold vehicles stationary and not while vehicles are in motion;
- pads manufactured as part of an original equipment service contract for vehicles manufactured prior to 2021 (but the exemption expires in 2031); and

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- pads used in motorcycles, vehicles not subject to vehicle licensing requirements, vehicles using certain brakes normally emitting no debris or fluid, and military combat vehicles.

Bans. Beginning in:

- 2014, sale of pads containing more than trace amounts of asbestos, cadmium, chromium, lead, and mercury is banned.
- 2021, sale of pads containing more than five percent copper is banned. Pads certified to have been manufactured prior to 2021 are exempt (but the exemption expires in 2031).

Requiring Acceptable Low-Copper Pads. Beginning as early as 2025, sale of pads containing more 0.5 percent copper is banned, if the Department of Ecology (Ecology) finds that acceptable low-copper pads (acceptable pads) are available.

Acceptable pads:

- do not contain more than 0.5 percent copper, material banned in 2014 (see above), and other material determined by Ecology to be harmful to human health or the environment;
- enable brakes to meet safety standards;
- are available at a cost and quantity to not cause significant financial hardship to manufacturers; and
- enable manufacturers to produce viable products meeting certain consumer expectations.

Prior to finding that acceptable pads are available, Ecology must determine that acceptable pads may be available. Ecology must then convene an advisory committee (committee) that includes representatives of Ecology, the State Patrol, a motor vehicle safety organization, the national highway traffic safety administration, and an environmental organization. The committee must assess availability of acceptable pads and recommend whether acceptable pads are available or unavailable. If, after considering the recommendation, Ecology finds that acceptable pads are available, it must report the finding to the Legislature by December 1 of the year in which it makes the finding. Beginning five years after the report submittal date, but no earlier than 2025, sale of pads containing more than 0.5 percent copper is banned.

However, if Ecology finds that acceptable pads are not available after the committee assessment process, it must periodically evaluate the finding. If Ecology later determines that acceptable pads may be available, the committee assessment process, agency finding, report submittal, and potential ban may occur, as described above.

Ecology Review. By 2013 and thereafter, manufacturers of pads sold in Washington must provide Ecology with data enabling the agency to determine concentrations of antimony, copper, nickel, and zinc in the pads. Using that and other data, Ecology must establish baseline concentration levels by July 1, 2012. Ecology must ensure that levels do not increase by 50 percent over baseline levels and also track progress toward reducing use of copper. If concentration levels increase by more than 50 percent over baseline levels, Ecology must determine potential impact on human health and the environment. If studies

demonstrate the need for controlling use of antimony, copper, nickel, and zinc in pads, Ecology may consider recommending limits.

Certification. Manufacturers of pads offered for sale in Washington must certify compliance and mark proof of certification on pads. Ecology must, after consulting interested parties, develop compliance criteria by December 1, 2012. Compliance criteria includes self-certification by manufacturers using accredited laboratories and marking proof of certification on pads. Beginning in 2021, manufacturers of new vehicles offered for sale in Washington must ensure that vehicles are equipped with pads certified to be compliant.

Enforcement. Ecology must enforce requirements. Enforcement must rely on notification and information exchange. Ecology must issue one warning letter to manufacturers, distributors, or retailers selling pads violating requirements and offer assistance. If compliance is not achieved, Ecology may assess a \$10,000 civil penalty for each violation upon manufacturers, distributors, or retailers violating requirements. Collected penalties must be deposited in the state toxics control account. Manufacturers, distributors, or retailers that knowingly violate requirements must recall pads and reimburse purchase and return shipping and handling costs.

**EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY ENVIRONMENT, WATER & ENERGY COMMITTEE (Recommended Substitute):** The Recommended Substitute:

- revises a definition of acceptable low copper pads: pads must not contain material determined harmful by Ecology and must be available at cost and quantity to not cause significant financial hardship to manufacturers and enable them to meet certain consumer expectations;
- narrows coverage of pad bans by adding exclusions for pads used in motorcycles and in many other vehicles not subject to vehicle licensing requirements and exempting pads manufactured as part of original equipment service contract for vehicles manufactured prior to 2021 (exemption expires in 2031);
- delays ban on pads containing more than five percent copper from 2015 to 2021, and exempts pads manufactured prior to 2021 from ban (exemption expires in 2031);
- clarifies compliance certification requirements for manufacturers;
- requires Ecology to issue a warning letter and offer assistance before imposing penalties for noncompliance;
- authorizes manufacturers to seek exemptions from Ecology based on special needs or characteristics of vehicles;
- changes the deadline for Ecology to determine possible availability of acceptable low copper pads (December 1, 2015, rather than December 1, 2020), moving up advisory committee review and potential Ecology finding requiring use of low copper pads (however, the earliest ban date of 2025 is maintained); and
- deletes Ecology rulemaking authority.

**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 on Original Bill:** PRO: Dissolved copper from brake pads is a major contaminant, posing significant environmental risks. This proactive approach is necessary to limit the amount of dissolved copper entering Puget Sound. Longstanding research confirms the negative effect of dissolved copper from brake pads on salmon. Close to seven metric tons of dissolved copper enters Puget Sound every year, half from brake pads.

OTHER: With work, this bill could become a national model. The bill should only apply to new cars. Most brake pads will be compliant before 2021. While the Association of Washington Business supports the intent of this bill, and is involved in discussions, it cannot support the bill in its current form. Safety standards are important, as is product viability. Applicability should be narrowed.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: David Dicks, Puget Sound Partnership; Rob Duff, Department of Ecology; Bruce Wishart, People for Puget Sound.

OTHER: Curt Augustine, Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers; Grant Nelson, Association of Washington Business.