

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5292

As Passed Senate, March 7, 1995

Title: An act relating to civil penalties for violation of gas pipeline safety regulations.

Brief Description: Revising the level of civil penalties for violation of gas pipeline safety regulations.

Sponsors: Senators Sutherland and Finkbeiner.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Energy, Telecommunications & Utilities: 1/31/95, 2/16/95 [DP].
Passed Senate, 3/7/95, 46-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, TELECOMMUNICATIONS & UTILITIES

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Sutherland, Chair; Loveland, Vice Chair; Finkbeiner, Hochstatter and Owen.

Staff: Phil Moeller (786-7445)

Background: The Federal Office of Pipeline Safety authorizes the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission to operate the natural gas pipeline safety program in Washington State. This delegation of authority also provides a federal grant of up to \$100,000 to fund the program.

Congress recently amended the Pipeline Safety Act to increase penalties for safety violations. Within the past year, federal officials reviewed the existing state program. They concluded that state penalties must be equivalent to federal penalties so as to preserve Washington's eligibility to operate the pipeline safety program and to continue to receive federal grant funds.

Summary of Bill: References to specific penalty amounts for violating natural gas pipeline safety provisions are removed. The Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission is directed to set penalty levels by rule.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: Maintaining a state inspection program ensures the greatest level of safety. This bill allows the state program to continue.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Tim Sweeney, WUTC; Charlie Brown, Washington Natural Gas; Tim Bell, WUTC.

House Amendment(s): The amendment clarifies a reference to federal law.