

FINAL BILL REPORT

SSB 5977

C 398 L 95

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Revising administration of forensic investigations.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Government Operations (originally sponsored by Senators Loveland, Haugen, Long, Smith and Winsley).

Senate Committee on Government Operations

Senate Committee on Ways & Means

House Committee on Law & Justice

House Committee on Appropriations

Background: The Washington State Crime Lab is part of the Washington State Patrol. Its purpose is to analyze physical evidence relating to any crime and to train local law enforcement personnel. The Washington State Advisory Council on Criminal Justice Services helps the crime lab use its resources efficiently.

The Washington State Toxicology Laboratory is established at the University of Washington Medical School under the direction of the State Toxicologist. It performs the toxicologic procedures requested by the coroners, medical examiners and prosecuting attorneys. It is funded from class H liquor license fees in the amount of \$150,000 or 1.75 percent of these fees, whichever is greater.

The Washington State Death Investigations Council has several functions incidental to fostering improved death investigations as part of the state's criminal justice system. One of these functions is to preserve and enhance the Toxicology Laboratory. Another function is to fund the state's death investigation system.

Summary: The Death Investigations Council is renamed the Forensic Investigations Council. It replaces the Advisory Council on Criminal Justice Services as the assisting entity of the Washington State Patrol crime lab. The crime lab is made its number one priority. It is given the mandate to participate and to approve the crime lab budget and the Toxicology Laboratory budget before they are submitted to the Office of Financial Management.

The membership of the council is increased from nine to 10. Two current members are removed and three new members are added. They are nominated from candidates offered by their various interest groups.

Up to 5 percent of the motor vehicle excise tax is appropriated for the enhancement of the State Patrol crime lab. This appropriation reduces the total motor vehicle excise tax by 5 percent.

The 5 percent that may be appropriated for the crime laboratory from distribution to the cities is excluded in all pertinent statutes.

The \$125 fee assessed against persons convicted of driving under the influence (DUI), which fee was scheduled to expire July 1, 1995, is made permanent, and the sunset on this fee is repealed. Of the portion of the fee that goes to the State Treasurer for distribution, the distribution split is changed, and the provisions for which the funds are used are changed. For the 1995-97 fiscal biennium, 50 percent goes to support the State Toxicology Lab and 50 percent goes to the State Patrol for DUI investigation and prevention. At the end of the biennium, the split changes to 15 and 85 percent, respectively.

The sum of \$300,000 from class H liquor license revenues is distributed for the support of the State Toxicology Lab.

The State Toxicology Lab operates under the authority of the Forensic Investigations Council, rather than under the University of Washington (UW). The council, rather than the president of the UW, appoints the State Toxicologist.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	44	0	
House	94	0	(House amended)
Senate	46	0	(Senate concurred)

Effective: May 16, 1995 (Section 17)
July 23, 1995