

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1050

As Reported By House Committee On:

Commerce & Labor

Title: An act relating to coal mine safety inspections.

Brief Description: Relieving the department of labor and industries of the duties of coal mine inspection.

Sponsors: Representatives Conway and Clements; by request of Department of Labor & Industries.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Commerce & Labor: 1/27/99, 2/4/99 [DP].

<h4>Brief Summary of Bill</h4>

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Repeals outdated sections relating to coal mine inspections. |
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HOUSE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE & LABOR

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 8 members: Representatives Clements, Republican Co-Chair; Conway, Democratic Co-Chair; B. Chandler, Republican Vice Chair; Wood, Democratic Vice Chair; Hurst; Lisk; McIntire and McMorris.

Staff: Douglas Ruth (786-7134).

Background:

The state coal mining code was first enacted before the turn of the century. As a result, it primarily addressed the underground mining of coal. In 1997, the Legislature repealed the statute that regulated coal mining. The statute was repealed because the federal government had taken over regulation of coal mining operations and because there no longer existed any operational underground coal mines in Washington. Currently, the Department of Labor and Industries does not regulate or inspect coal mines.

Summary of Bill:

Two sections of law concerning coal mine inspections are repealed. These sections were missed in 1997 when the Legislature repealed the mining statute.

The repealed sections require the Department of Labor and Industries to inspect coal mines for compliance with the mining codes, investigate any explosions or loss of life at a mine, authorize courts to order recalcitrant owners to permit inspections of a mine, and create a process for gaining and enforcing orders for corrective action issued by courts.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: This is a technical "clean-up" bill. Still, it is important that these sections of law be repealed. These sections require the state to inspect coal mines every four months. However, the state has not inspected coal mines for many years because regulation of coal mine operations is in the federal government's jurisdiction. This creates a possible basis for legal action against the state in case of injury at a coal mine. Repealing these sections would eliminate any risk of legal action.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Suzanne Mager, Department of Labor and Industries.