

House Bill Analysis

ESSB 6715

HOUSE AGRICULTURE AND ECOLOGY COMMITTEE

February
22, 2000

- Encouraging recycling and waste reduction.

BACKGROUND:

The legislature adopted the Waste Not Washington Act in 1989 (ESHB 1671). The top priorities in the act were established as waste reduction and recycling of source-separated materials. The law also set a goal of recycling 50 percent of the municipal solid waste stream by 1995. The recycling rate reached a high of 39 percent in 1996, but dropped to 32.4 percent the following year.

The Recycling Assessment Panel was convened by the Department of Ecology in September 1999 to assess the reasons for the drop in recycling, and to examine and recommend ways to increase recycling. The panel included members of the Legislature, citizens, and representatives of local government, recyclers, and the Department of Ecology. The panel provided recommendations in a report to the Legislature in December 1999. Among the report's findings was an estimate that 40 percent of the municipal solid waste stream on a national basis is made up of building-related construction and demolition debris.

The Utilities and Transportation Commission (UTC) sets rates for solid waste collection companies. These rates cover all costs of service and a guaranteed rate of return. Currently, 100 percent of the proceeds from the sale of recycled materials is passed back to the residential customers served by the company.

SUMMARY:

The Department of General Administration is directed to work with the construction industry in developing guidelines for job-site waste management planning.

State procurement guidelines for recycled products are expanded to include building products and materials, and not only insulation. The recycled content product standards apply to post-secondary institutions, as well as to existing state government procurement.

Governments, the private sector and consumers are encouraged to share information to promote product stewardship. Product stewardship is defined as a principle that directs all actors in the life cycle of a product to minimize the impacts of that product on the environment.

If a construction project receives state funding, any recycled content products used in the project must adhere to the state's product standards.

The UTC is required to authorize residential solid waste collection companies to retain up to 30 percent of the revenues from the sale of recycled materials. This incentive only applies when the solid waste collection companies submit a plan to the UTC that demonstrates how the revenues will be used to increase recycling.

The deadline for meeting the state's 50 percent recycling goal is extended to 2005, and a new goal is established to eliminate yard debris in landfills by 2010. Yard debris is defined.

Local governments are authorized to establish residential collection rate structures that provide economic incentives for waste reduction and increased recycling rates. If adopted in a solid waste comprehensive plan, local governments must also adopt ordinances to implement the rate structures, and the UTC may issue rules to implement this section.

By March 1 of each year, entities that collect recycled material must report their activity to the Department of Ecology. Penalties of not less than 100 dollars and not more than 1000 dollars may be imposed for failure to file the recycling report.

The evaluation of the solid waste stream is expanded to include construction, demolition, and land clearing debris, and major organics (biosolids, manure and major food-processing wastes). The Department of Ecology is prohibited from adopting rules to implement best management practices for parts of the waste stream subject to special evaluation.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available

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