

Transportation Committee

HB 1454

Brief Description: *Granting the utilities and transportation commission authority to inspect businesses that ship hazardous materials by rail.*

Sponsors: *Representatives Fisher, Hankins, Lovick, Mitchell and Cooper; by request of Utilities & Transportation Commission.*

Brief Summary of Bill

- *The Utilities and Transportation Commission hazardous materials inspectors may enter without permission the property of any business that ships hazardous materials by rail or of any business that manufactures or tests hazardous materials containers used to ship these materials by rail.*
- *Entry is limited to the types of inspections outlined in federal regulations and must occur at a reasonable time.*

Hearing Date: *2/26/01*

Staff: *Penny Nerup (786-7335).*

Background:

One of the powers and duties of the Utilities and Transportation Commission (UTC) is to inspect the tracks, bridges, structures, equipment, apparatus, and appliances of railroads that travel in Washington to be sure they are safe for their employees and the public. Included in these powers is the duty to work with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) to inspect shipments of hazardous materials that arrive in and pass through Washington.

Currently, there is one UTC inspector who is certified by the FRA and who works with three federal hazardous materials inspectors to perform inspections in over 300 sites within the state. However, unlike the federal inspectors, the UTC inspector cannot enter private property to conduct an inspection without permission from the shipper. If the shipper

refuses entry to the UTC inspector, the inspector can only enter the shipper's property if accompanied by a federal inspector.

Summary of Bill:

No new program is created and the existing hazardous materials inspection program is not expanded.

The UTC hazardous materials inspector may enter the property of any business that ships hazardous materials by rail or that manufactures, repairs, or tests hazardous materials containers used to ship these materials by rail. Entry is limited to performing those types of inspections that are outlined in federal regulations. Entry must be at a reasonable time and in a reasonable manner.

The term business,— as used in this bill, is all inclusive and is not limited to common carriers or to public service companies.

Appropriation: *None.*

Fiscal Note: *Available.*

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