

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2172

As Reported by House Committee On:
Commerce & Labor

Title: An act relating to the repair and maintenance of backflow prevention assemblies.

Brief Description: Modifying provisions on the repair and maintenance of backflow prevention assemblies.

Sponsors: Representatives Grant and Mastin.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Commerce & Labor: 2/26/01, 2/27/01 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Creates a specialty plumbing certificate of competency for backflow prevention assembly maintenance.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE & LABOR

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 8 members: Representatives Clements, Republican Co-Chair; Conway, Democratic Co-Chair; B. Chandler, Republican Vice Chair; Wood, Democratic Vice Chair; Hunt, Kenney, Lisk and McMorris.

Staff: Jill Reinmuth (786-7134).

Background:

State law requires that a backflow prevention device be installed in piping carrying used water, chemicals, liquids, gases or other substances that is interconnected with piping carrying potable water if there is a possibility that undrinkable substances could flow into the pipe or potable water system. A backflow prevention device prevents undrinkable substances from flowing into pure or potable water systems.

The Department of Health requires that a backflow assembly tester inspect certain backflow prevention devices annually. To inspect these devices, a person must be

certified as a backflow assembly tester by the Department of Health. To maintain these devices, the person must be certified as a journey level plumber and registered as a contractor by the Department of Labor and Industries.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

A specialty plumber certificate of competency for in-line maintenance of backflow prevention assembly within buildings is created. To qualify to take the examination to become certified in this specialty, a person must be certified as a backflow assembly tester by the Department of Health and registered as a contractor by the Department of Labor and Industries. A person need not be certified as a journey level plumber.

A person is eligible to take the examination for a specialty plumber certificate of competency if he or she completes a course of study in the plumbing trade at a school licensed by the Work Force Education and Coordinating Board.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The work that may be performed by a certified backflow prevention assembly specialty plumber is limited to exclude repair of backflow prevention assemblies within buildings.

The qualifications required to take the examination are modified to include completion of a course of study in the plumbing trade at a school licensed by the Work Force Education and Coordinating Board.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 22, 2001.

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

Testimony For: Annual testing and maintenance of backflow prevention assemblies and cross connections are essential to protect the water supply. Under current law, backflow assembly testers can maintain assemblies outside buildings, but not inside buildings. It is burdensome and costly to consumers to hire plumbers to maintain assemblies inside buildings. It creates potential public health risks when assemblies are not maintained.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: (In support) Roger Summy, Advanced Testing and Service; Steve Herres, Steve Herres Construction and Spokane Regional Cross Connection Control Group; and

Tim Cantwell, Woodinville Water District.

(In support with amendment) Gary Smith, Independent Business Association.