
**Agriculture & Ecology
Committee**

2SSB 6356

Brief Description: Creating the children's environmental health and protection advisory council.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Franklin, Winsley, Fairley, Shin, Regala, Kline, Costa, Poulsen, Rasmussen, Keiser, Deccio, Kohl-Welles, Kastama, Prentice, Eide, McAuliffe, Parlette, Fraser, Long and Jacobsen).

Brief Summary of Second Substitute Bill

- Creates the 15-member Children's Environmental Health and Protection Advisory Council (Council) to review existing laws, regulations, and standards to ensure adequate protection of children's health from environmental hazards.
- Requires the state Board of Health to provide staff support to the Council and allows the state Board of Health to accept public and private funds for Council activities.

Hearing Date: 2/28/02

Staff: Caroleen Dineen (786-7156).

Background:

Governance of the state's public health system includes state and local components. The Department of Health (Department) is the state agency responsible for preserving public health, monitoring health care costs, maintaining minimum standards for quality health care delivery, and planning activities related to public health. The state Board of Health is the state regulatory authority in a variety of public health areas, including drinking water, immunizations, school safety, and food handling. Washington also has 34 local health departments or districts providing public health services at the local level.

More than 70,000 chemicals are in international commerce, and thousands of additional compounds are released into the environment as pollutants, combustion by-products, or wastes. Almost 500 synthetic chemicals are detectable in human tissues. Recent studies have detected pesticide residues in the urine of Washington children and a variety of

contaminants, including polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), dioxins, nicotine, metals, and some pesticides, in human breast milk. In addition, many children have nervous system damage from lead exposure.

Summary of Bill:

The Children's Environmental Health and Protection Advisory Council (Council) is created. The Council includes 15 members appointed as follows:

- Four legislative members, one from each caucus of the House of Representatives and the Senate, appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the Senate respectively;
- One tribal representative appointed by the Governor;
- One member of the state Board of Health;
- One licensed pediatric health care provider with expertise in the field of children's environmental health, appointed by the governor;
- One parent or guardian whose child has been clinically diagnosed with exposure to an environmental health hazard, appointed by the governor;
- One expert in the field of environmental toxicology, appointed by the governor;
- The Secretaries of the following agencies or their designees Department of Health, Department of Ecology, Department of Agriculture, Department of Social and Health Services, and Department of Labor and Industries; and
- The Superintendent of Public Instruction or designee.

Members of the Council serve without compensation.

The Council is required to meet at least four times per year to review and comment on existing laws, rules, regulations, and standards to ensure that they adequately protect children's health from environmental hazards. "Environmental hazard" is defined as toxic chemical, biological, or physical environmental agents resulting from human activities or natural processes that may impact the health of exposed children. "Environmental hazard" includes such pollutants as lead, pesticides, air pollutants, contaminated drinking water, polluted waters, toxic waste, polychlorinated biphenyls, secondhand tobacco smoke, and industrial and home chemicals.

The Council is also required to work collaboratively with state agencies and others without duplicating current work in this area. By December 1st of 2003 and 2004, the Council must report to the Governor and the Legislature with recommendations for regulatory changes to reduce children's exposure to environmental hazards and recommendations for collaborative approaches to public education.

The state Board of Health is to provide staff support and administrative assistance to the Council. The state Board of Health may solicit, accept, and spend gifts, grants, bequests, devises, and other funds from public and private sources for the Council's activities.

Legislative findings are included regarding the many preventable exposures to environmental hazards children face in their schools, homes, and communities and the disproportionate risk of such exposures for children with higher rates of poverty. Legislative findings also specify

the need for ongoing communication, collaboration, and cooperation of affected communities to produce solutions to complex environmental health problems.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Expiration Date: The Council provisions expire June 30, 2005.