

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5231

As of January 30, 2001

Title: An act relating to requiring the treatment of biomedical waste cultures and stocks prior to disposal.

Brief Description: Requiring the treatment of biomedical waste cultures and stocks prior to disposal.

Sponsors: Senators Swecker, Fraser and Franklin.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Environment, Energy & Water: 2/6/01.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY & WATER

Staff: Jim Metropulos (786-7784)

Background: Current law defines cultures and stocks as laboratory wastes infectious to humans. These wastes may contain high concentrations of pathogenic organisms, some of which are highly contagious and dangerous.

Requiring the treatment of medical waste stocks and cultures is one of the recommendations included in the article *Transmission of Mycobacterium tuberculosis from Medical Waste*—from the Journal of the American Medical Association (Volume 284, No, 13, October 4, 2000). This article documented the exposure of workers at the Stericycle plant in Morton, Washington to TB that was generated at one of the medical waste treatment plant's client facilities. Stericycle continues to grind and shred medical waste prior to subjecting it to decontaminating treatment.

Summary of Bill: Effective January 1, 2002, generators of cultures and stocks must either treat on-site or segregate cultures and stocks from other biomedical waste and transport them to a treatment facility. Neither generators of cultures and stocks nor biomedical waste treatment facilities may subject cultures to a process that generates or releases airborne pathogens from the waste before treatment.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on January 1, 2002.