

**SENATE BILL REPORT**

**SB 5462**

**AS OF JANUARY 28, 1992**

**Brief Description:** Prohibiting out-of-region low-level waste at Washington's facility until the compact is modified to meet certain conditions.

**SPONSORS:** Senators Williams, Thorsness, Sutherland and A. Smith.

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & UTILITIES**

**Staff:** Phil Moeller (786-7445)

**Hearing Dates:** February 26, 1991; January 31, 1992

**BACKGROUND:**

A commercial facility to dispose of commercial low-level radioactive waste is located on federal land near Richland. The land is leased to the state and then sub-leased to the site operator.

Washington serves as the host state for a regional compact of states formed to collectively dispose of low-level radioactive waste. Since Washington serves as the host state, the person representing Washington on the Compact Executive Committee has the equivalent of veto power over compact policies.

Unlike other compacts formed throughout the nation for similar purposes, the Northwest Compact does not enforce an "export ban" whereby member states would be prohibited from disposing their waste outside the region.

Federal law stipulates that the Hanford site will become a regional monopoly for the disposal of waste after 1992. The site will then be dependent on relatively few large producers for revenue not only to the site operator, but to the specific funds created for the eventual closure of the site and the perpetual care and maintenance of the site. Without an export ban, it is possible some of the large users could dispose of waste at other locations with ensuing large losses of revenue for the site.

**SUMMARY:**

The Washington representative to the Northwest Compact Committee may not approve waste from outside of the Northwest region unless the compact is modified to include a ban on exporting waste outside of the region.

**Appropriation:** none

**Revenue:** none

**Fiscal Note:** none requested