

FINAL BILL REPORT

SHB 1667

Synopsis as Enacted

C 321 L 93

Brief Description: Prohibiting additives for on-site sewage disposal systems.

By House Committee on Environmental Affairs (originally sponsored by Representatives Romero, H. Myers, Heavey, Finkbeiner and Wolfe).

House Committee on Environmental Affairs
Senate Committee on Ecology & Parks

Background: Septic tank additives are generally used to control odors and to reduce the frequency in which sludge must be removed.

The active ingredients in these products vary greatly. They generally contain chlorinated organic solvents, strong acids or bases, or relatively innocuous nutrient supplements intended to enhance bacterial growth.

Research indicates that septic tank additives are ineffective at best, and may be harmful. Consumers using additives may be at risk in two ways. First, use of additives may ruin a drainfield and result in costly repair. Second, some additives, especially those containing chlorinated organic solvents, may contribute to groundwater contamination.

The Department of Health is in the process of developing rules for septic systems and other on-site systems. The proposed rules, in part, would ban the use of septic tank additives containing acids, bases, and chlorinated organic solvents. The proposed rules would not ban the sale or distribution of additives.

Summary: The use, sale and distribution of septic tank additives is prohibited beginning July 1, 1994. Indoor plumbing fixtures are not included in the definition of an on-site sewage disposal system. The Department of Health may review and approve an additive for sale within the state. Any costs incurred by the department in reviewing an additive are to be paid by the person or entity seeking the department's approval.

The state attorney general and city and county prosecuting attorneys may enjoin the prohibited sale or distribution of an additive. The Department of Health is responsible for notifying major distributors and wholesalers of the prohibition on septic tank additives. Distributors and wholesalers of additives are required to notify retailers within 30 days of being notified by the department.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	69	29	
Senate	36	11	(Senate amended)
House	70	27	(House concurred)

Effective: July 25, 1993