

FINAL BILL REPORT

SB 5898

PARTIAL VETO

C 261 L 95

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Providing that research studies for alternatives to grass burning be conducted by Washington State University.

Sponsors: Senators Rasmussen, West, Loveland, Newhouse, Bauer and Morton.

Senate Committee on Ecology & Parks

House Committee on Agriculture & Ecology

Background: Since 1977, part of the fee paid by grass growers for field burning permits has been allocated to support research on reducing air pollution from burning. The portion allocated is currently \$.50 per acre of land to be burned. The total amount of fees collected for research between 1977 and 1994 was \$326,550.

Before 1991, the Department of Ecology determined what research would be funded. Between 1979 to 1985, it paid \$118,000 to the University of Washington to develop a portable grass seed burning machine. Between 1989 and 1991, it paid \$41,000 to Washington State University (WSU) for continued work on the portable grass seed burning machine.

The 1991 Washington Clean Air Act established the Agricultural Burning Practices and Research Task Force, charged with identifying research needs relating to the adverse effects of the open burning of seed grasses. The Department of Ecology is charged with approving the task force recommendations.

Just prior to the establishment of the task force in 1991, the Department of Ecology shifted its funding from in-state research on the mobile field burner to a dethatching demonstration project conducted by an out-of-state private company, Phoenix Industries of Oregon. It paid the company \$70,800. In 1992, the new task force decided to continue funding the dethatching project through WSU.

Summary: It is mandated that any study authorized by the task force and approved by Department of Ecology must be conducted by Washington State University. WSU may not use more than 8 percent of research funds for administrative overhead. WSU is required to submit a brief report every two years to the appropriate standing committees of the Legislature assessing the potential of its research to result in practical and economical alternatives to grass seed burning. The reporting requirement is terminated once grass seed burning is prohibited. Procedures are established so that city selection committee members can vote by mail for air pollution authority board members.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate 47 0
House 93 3 (House amended)
Senate 47 0 (Senate concurred)

Effective: July 23, 1995

Partial Veto Summary: The emergency clause was vetoed.