

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6513

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Water, Energy & Environment, January 31, 2006

Title: An act relating to biomonitoring.

Brief Description: Requiring biomonitoring as an element of the environmental health tracking program.

Sponsors: Senators Fraser, Poulsen, Pridemore, Regala, Rockefeller, Kohl-Welles and Kline.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Water, Energy & Environment: 1/18/06, 1/31/06 [DPS-WM, DNP, w/oRec].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WATER, ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6513 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Poulsen, Chair; Rockefeller, Vice Chair; Fraser, Pridemore and Regala.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Morton, Ranking Minority Member; Honeyford and Mulliken.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senator Delvin.

Staff: Sam Thompson (786-7413)

Background: "Biomonitoring" describes measuring of environmental chemicals in people by analyzing blood, urine, and breast milk samples for pollutants, synthetic chemicals, and industrial compounds. It may indicate trends in chemical exposures, identify disproportionately affected and vulnerable population groups, and link exposures and pollution-related disease. It aids policymakers in assessing effectiveness of regulations and setting priorities for regulatory action.

The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) conducts a national biomonitoring program. In recent years, CDC has also awarded grants to many states, including Washington, to plan state biomonitoring programs. With CDC grant funds, the Washington Department of Health (DOH) developed a biomonitoring plan in 2003. The plan--which identifies biomonitoring priorities concerning chemicals, environmental settings, and populations for monitoring--has not been funded for implementation.

Summary of Substitute Bill: Effective July 1, 2007, a Washington biomonitoring program conducted by DOH is authorized. The program will be an integral part of the agency's state environmental public health tracking network. To implement priorities, \$50,000 is

appropriated to DOH for the biennium ending June 30, 2007, from the state toxics control account.

In conducting biomonitoring, DOH will collaborate with the Department of Ecology (DOE), local health jurisdictions, and other public health agencies to assist agencies and policymakers in improving environmental health.

DOH will adopt program guidelines and protocols to: ensure confidentiality and informed consent; cover reporting of findings to participants, communities, and the public; emphasize that all program aspects are culturally sensitive; and clearly explain the distinction between exposure data and analysis of health effects that may occur from exposures, when agencies communicate with participants.

In selecting measurements, DOH will give priority to: measuring elevated levels of toxic substances in a population group; determining exposure levels in groups that may be at increased risk of exposure; providing information on exposure levels for studies examining the relationship between exposure and adverse health effects; tracking trends in group exposure to specific toxic substances; and assessing effectiveness of efforts to reduce exposure to toxic substances.

By September 30, 2006, DOH will provide recommendations to the Governor and Legislature for funding the program. Recommendations will provide a proposed phase-in of highest priorities, include cost-sharing proposals among participating entities, and examine integrating with and complementing nationwide programs. In developing recommendations, DOH will consult with DOE and local health jurisdictions.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The definition of "biomonitoring" is revised to provide that it is the process by which the presence and concentration of synthetic chemicals (rather than toxic chemicals) or their metabolites are identified within a biospecimen to assess exposure (rather than chemical bodily burden). Several non-substantive grammatical changes are made.

Appropriation: \$50,000

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: The bill contains several effective dates. Please refer to the bill.

Testimony For: This legislation will enable the CDC-funded biomonitoring plan to be implemented, thereby enhancing the Department of Health's ability to protect public health by providing necessary measurements and data. "Normal" or "toxic" levels of exposures for many chemicals are unknown or not completely understood; more information is clearly needed.

Testimony Against: None.

Testimony Other: It is important that collected data, which could be useful, be properly handled and explained in context to avoid unwarranted public alarm. Simply because trace amounts of chemicals are present in people does not mean that they

cause problems. Natural toxins come from certain vegetables, and the toxicity of any chemical is related to the dose. This program should not be funded from toxic control funds, which have been paid by businesses to fund cleanup efforts.

Who Testified: PRO: Robert Duff, DOH; Carol Kraege, DOE.

OTHER: Grant Nelson, Association of Washington Business; Heather Hansen, Washington Friends of Farms & Forests; Dan Coyne, Croplife America; Mark Greenberg, American Chemistry Council.