
Environment Committee

HB 2380

Brief Description: Concerning Washington's economic development potential as a world leader in the stewardship of postconsumer materials.

Sponsors: Representatives Smith and Doglio.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Directs the Utilities and Transportation Commission to develop a public outreach strategy and the Department of Ecology to update solid waste management guidelines for local governments, with the goal of both activities being to reduce the rates of contamination of recyclable materials.
- Directs the Department of Commerce to conduct an economic analysis of certain aspects of the solid waste stream and recycling markets.
- Provides for the Department of Ecology to collect certain additional data on solid waste and recycling material streams, and to focus their solid waste management evaluations on exported waste, domestic economic reuse opportunities, and processing rates for recyclable materials.

Hearing Date:

Staff: Jacob Lipson (786-7196).

Background:

Under the state's solid waste management laws, local governments are the primary government entity responsible for implementing state solid waste management requirements, although the Department of Ecology (ECY) also has certain roles in overseeing the administration of solid waste management laws. The ECY is responsible for working cooperatively with local governments as they develop their local solid waste management plans, including through the

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development of guidelines to be used by local governments, which the ECY was required to have prepared for local government use by 1990 (1990 guidelines). The 1990 guidelines provide recommendations on materials that local governments could designate as recyclable, and were required to be integrated into the ECY-developed state comprehensive solid waste plan. The ECY has periodically updated the 1990 guidelines to reflect changes in state solid waste laws.

Facilities that manage, generate, store, or otherwise handle solid wastes are required to obtain a solid waste permit from the local jurisdictional health department (JHD). A JHD may be a city, county, or district public health department. The issuance of solid waste permits by JHDs is reviewed by the ECY. Permit holders are required to report specified information about their solid waste activities to the ECY. Inert wastes, including glass and steel, and solid wastes that are being recycled are exempt from the requirement to obtain a solid waste handling permit, so long as certain other management conditions for the materials are met. The ECY may adopt rules exempting categories of solid waste handling facilities that it determines to present little environmental risk and that meet environmental protection and performance standards that are required of other solid waste facilities.

The ECY evaluates, analyzes, and monitors the solid waste stream. As part of this effort, collectors of solid waste must annually report to the ECY the types and quantities of waste they collect, and the locations where they deliver that waste. The ECY's solid waste stream analysis must incorporate specified types of information and evaluations, including the waste generation and recycling rates for different waste categories, potential rates of solid waste reduction, and solid waste technologies. The ECY must keep its solid waste data current, and make it available to local governments and the solid waste industry. In developing their solid waste stream evaluation, the ECY must prioritize the evaluation of categories of waste that comprise a comparatively large volume of the solid waste stream, or that present a risk of harm to human health.

The Utilities and Transportation Commission (UTC) supervises and regulates private solid waste companies, including reviewing and approving their rates and fees. Cities and towns also sometimes directly provide solid waste collection services.

Summary of Bill:

Economic Analysis.

The Department of Commerce must arrange for the completion of an economic analysis of solid waste and recyclable material processing, export, and disposal in Washington. The analysis must consider opportunities and barriers to existing solid waste and recycling businesses, the implications of recent recycling market changes in the Western United States, and scenario models of impacts from policies that would maximize in-state solid waste and recyclable material processing and disposal. The analysis must be submitted in a report to the Legislature by December 1, 2019, with recommendations regarding changes to state solid waste and recycling policies to increase in-state solid waste and recyclable material processing and disposal.

Public Outreach and Guidelines for Local Governments.

The Utilities and Transportation Commission (UTC) must work with the Department of Ecology (ECY) and counties, cities, waste and recyclable material collectors, and storage facilities to

develop a public outreach strategy to improve consumer education about solid waste management and to reduce recyclable material contamination rates. The outreach strategy must be statewide in scope, but must account for local variation in collection activities. The UTC must submit the strategy to the Legislature by October 1, 2019, along with recommendations for any new funding necessary to implement the outreach strategy.

By March 2019 and periodically afterwards, the ECY must update the 1990 guidelines to reflect changes in recyclable material market conditions. The guidelines must also have a goal of:

- reducing recyclable material contamination rates;
- maximizing the economically viable reuse of recyclable materials; and
- promoting statewide uniformity and standardization in recyclable material collection methods.

The UTC's public outreach effort must be designed to operate in tandem with and support these guidelines.

Solid Waste Evaluations and Reporting.

Facilities that are exempt from solid waste permitting requirements or that export solid waste from Washington must provide annual reports to the ECY regarding their operations. The reports must include the types and quantities of wastes handled by the facility and that are exported from Washington, as well as the ultimate destination of exported materials.

The ECY's state solid waste stream analysis must:

- prioritize evaluation of categories of solid waste that present economic opportunities for material recovery, recycling, and reuse, alongside the existing prioritized categories of solid waste that are high-volume or present a health risk;
- Include information regarding the rates and volumes of exported solid waste and recyclable materials, by category;
- Include the rates and volumes of collected recyclable materials that end up being processed rather than disposed of; and
- Make its solid waste data available to the public, be updated by December 1, 2018, and be kept current to address changes from evolving solid waste and recyclable material market dynamics.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 9, 2018.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.