

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HJM 4007

*As Passed House
March 13, 1991*

Brief Description: Concerning the study of electric and magnetic fields.

Sponsor(s): Representatives Hine, Grant, Holland, G. Fisher, Forner, Braddock, Heavey, Prentice, Leonard, Valle, Kremen, Fuhrman, Morton, Spanel and Anderson.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Energy & Utilities, February 22, 1991, DP;
Passed House, March 13, 1991, 92-0.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY & UTILITIES**

Majority Report: *Do pass.* Signed by 10 members: Representatives Grant, Chair; H. Myers, Vice Chair; May, Ranking Minority Member; Hochstatter, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bray; Casada; Cooper; R. Fisher; Jacobsen; and Rayburn.

Staff: Fred Adair (786-7113).

Background: Electricity use has become so commonplace and has enabled doing so many beneficial things that it has become essential to public health and welfare.

Electric and magnetic fields surround any electric current flow. This fact has been known for perhaps a century, but only within the last two decades has there been serious concern about health hazards from these fields.

Despite considerable research, science has not been able to pin down whether there is a health hazard from the fields. That is to say, science has not to date been able to provide either a clean bill of health or evidence of a demonstrated adverse effect.

Public interest in the problem has grown tremendously over the past three years and neither utilities nor government leaders find it efficacious to remain silent on the issue.

Intensified research may bring an earlier conclusion on whether there are adverse health effects from the fields.

Summary of Bill: The president of the United States, the president of the Senate, the speaker of the House of Representatives, and the state congressional delegation are urged to spend more on and accelerate the pace of national research on health effects from electric and magnetic fields. An independent advisory board to oversee research also is urged.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Testimony For: There is need for conclusive answers on whether there are adverse health effects from electric or magnetic fields.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Jackie Starr, Forest Estates Homeowners' Association (Renton area); Collins Sprague, The Washington Water Power Company; and Ron Newbry, Pacific Power and Light Company.