

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HCR 4405

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*As Reported By House Committee on:  
Environmental Affairs*

**Brief Description:** Creating a Biospheric Task Force.

**Sponsor(s):** Representatives Rust, Horn, Grant, D. Sommers, Nelson, Sprenkle, Phillips, Jacobsen, Pruitt and Brekke.

**Brief History:**

Reported by House Committee on:  
Environmental Affairs, February 15, 1991, DPA.

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**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON  
ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS**

**Majority Report:** *Do pass as amended.* Signed by 12 members: Representatives Rust, Chair; Valle, Vice Chair; Horn, Ranking Minority Member; Edmondson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bray; Brekke; G. Fisher; Neher; Phillips; Pruitt; Sprenkle; and Van Luven.

**Staff:** Rick Anderson 786-7114.

**Background:** The greenhouse effect is a theory describing an increase in the earth's average temperature caused by increased quantities of certain gases in the earth's atmosphere. Greenhouse gases allow ultra-violet radiation from the sun to pass into the atmosphere, but do not allow infrared radiation (heat) to pass out. Greenhouse gases include carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), methane (CH<sub>4</sub>), nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O), and ozone (O<sub>3</sub>). All greenhouse gases except CFCs occur naturally. Human activities, especially the combustion of fossil fuels, are responsible for increased production of greenhouse gases during the past two hundred years.

Stratospheric ozone, concentrated approximately 15 miles above the earth's surface, helps shield the earth from ultra-violet radiation from the sun. Studies have shown reductions in total stratospheric ozone of between two percent and six percent over the past 20 years. Ozone depletion is caused primarily by CFC's.

A number of state agencies have already undertaken programs that will directly or indirectly reduce the release of greenhouse and ozone depleting gases. No formal mechanism

currently exists to ensure that agency programs are adequate and well coordinated.

**Summary of Bill:** A Biospheric Task Force is created to oversee developments with respect to the greenhouse effect and ozone layer depletion and to make recommendations for needed state action. Task force membership includes members of the Legislature and representatives of state agencies, the academic community, industry, and citizen groups. Beginning December 1992, the task force must annually report to the appropriate legislative committees. The 1992 report will recommend whether or not the task force should be continued.

**Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill:** The amendment changes the date of the first report to December 1992 from December 1991.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested February 12, 1991.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Testimony For:** The bill will provide necessary interaction and oversight.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Witnesses:** Representative Dick Nelson (pro); Joe Williams, Department of Ecology (pro); and Amy Bell, State Energy Office (pro).