

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6203

AS PASSED SENATE, FEBRUARY 12, 1992

Brief Description: Revising cost restrictions associated with the Northwest low-level waste compact.

SPONSORS: Senators Thorsness and Williams

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & UTILITIES

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Thorsness, Chairman; Saling, Vice Chairman; Jesernig, Nelson, Roach, Stratton, Sutherland, and Williams.

Staff: Phil Moeller (786-7445)

Hearing Dates: January 31, 1992; February 4, 1992

BACKGROUND:

Washington is the host state of the Northwest Interstate Compact on Low-Level Radioactive Waste Management. Other members of this compact include Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Utah. As the host state, Washington oversees the administration of the compact through the state Department of Ecology.

Washington contains the host site for disposal of commercial low-level radioactive waste. This site is located on the Hanford reservation, specifically on part of a tract of 1000 acres that is leased by the state for 99 years from the United States. The commercial site consists of 100 acres of land subleased from the state by a private business, US Ecology, Inc.

The costs to run the interstate compact are paid from fees charged annually against entities that receive a permit to dispose material at the site. The compact meets three or four times per year to discuss compact policies related to the site and national issues that affect the Hanford site. These meetings rotate on a regular basis among the seven member states, without regard to the amount of volume produced in each state. The costs of these meetings are reimbursed from the permit fees charged against site users.

SUMMARY:

No costs shall be paid for or reimbursed by the state for participation of other member states in the Northwest Interstate Compact on Low-Level Radioactive Waste Management for compact meetings held outside the state of Washington.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: requested January 30, 1992

TESTIMONY FOR:

Washington is the state in which the disposal site is located. Therefore, when the future of the site is at stake, these meetings should be held in this state so that interested persons from Washington can easily attend the meetings. This bill does not prevent another state from hosting a meeting if another method of funding is used.

TESTIMONY AGAINST:

All of the states in the compact produce some low-level radioactive waste. Rotating the meeting locations among these states builds understanding and allows compact members to see the various facilities where this material is generated. This bill would offend the other states that are members of the compact.

TESTIFIED: Roger Stanley, Department of Ecology (con); Barry Bede, US Ecology, Inc. (pro)