
SENATE BILL 5228

State of Washington

56th Legislature

1999 Regular Session

By Senators Kohl-Welles, Patterson and Thibaudeau

Read first time 01/18/1999. Referred to Committee on Health & Long-Term Care.

1 AN ACT Relating to the health effects of noise; creating new
2 sections; and making an appropriation.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that:

5 (a) High levels of ambient noise may cause adverse auditory and
6 nonauditory effects, including hearing loss, communication and sleep
7 disturbance, increasing stress levels, and adversely impacting
8 cardiovascular and endocrine systems;

9 (b) Noise impacts are a function not only of the level of sound but
10 the duration of exposure to high levels of sound and the distance from
11 the noise source;

12 (c) Research indicates that, for example, exposure to noise of
13 ninety decibels or more for eight hours may cause damage, and exposure
14 to one hundred five-decibel noise for an hour or more may cause damage;

15 (d) The decibel levels of common sources of noise include:

16 (i) Jet take-off (one hundred thirty decibels);

17 (ii) Fireworks (one hundred thirty decibels);

18 (iii) Amplified rock music (one hundred twenty decibels);

19 (iv) Jackhammer (one hundred twenty decibels);

- 1 (v) Chain saw (one hundred decibels);
- 2 (vi) Lawnmower (eighty-five to one hundred decibels);
- 3 (vii) Seaplane (eighty to one hundred ten decibels);
- 4 (viii) Dirt bike (ninety-five decibels); and
- 5 (ix) Portable stereo (ninety-five decibels);

6 (e) With increasing population and increasing sources of noise,
7 more Washingtonians are exposed for longer periods to high noise
8 levels;

9 (f) The scientific research into the health effects of noise
10 exposure has advanced greatly in the recent past and state and local
11 programs should be reviewed in light of this research; and

12 (g) The state noise program, including technical assistance to
13 implementing local governments, has not been comprehensively reviewed
14 since its initiation nearly twenty-five years ago.

15 (2) Therefore the legislature intends by this act to authorize a
16 comprehensive review of current federal research studies on the health
17 effects of noise and a review of current state and local noise programs
18 in order to provide greater understanding of opportunities to
19 strengthen such programs as well as further public education regarding
20 the health effects of noise.

21 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** By January 1, 2000, the department of health
22 with the guidance of the board of health shall provide to the
23 appropriate committees of the senate and the house of representatives
24 an assessment of the health effects of noise and recommendations for
25 reducing such effects. The study shall include:

26 (1) A review of the literature on the effects of noise, with an
27 emphasis upon more contemporary research completed in the previous two
28 decades, subsequent to the authorization of the state's noise control
29 program in 1974. The review shall include review of the research
30 findings on direct auditory effects, as well as nonauditory effects
31 such as sleep and communication disturbance, and stress effects;

32 (2) An assessment of the principal noise sources in Washington
33 communities and trends in cumulative noise levels in representative
34 urban, suburban, and rural areas;

35 (3) A review of the current noise control programs at the state and
36 local level, including public education and compliance activities;

37 (4) A review of federal noise control laws and programs and
38 regulatory subjects preempted by federal laws;

1 (5) A review of existing studies concerning whether disadvantaged
2 groups have a disproportionately higher exposure to unhealthy noise
3 levels; and

4 (6) Recommendations for improving state and local noise control
5 programs to address the health effects identified and for more
6 effective administration of existing programs, including state
7 financial and technical assistance to local governments.

8 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1) In conducting the noise study required
9 by section 2 of this act, the department of health shall form an
10 advisory committee including representatives of community organizations
11 concerned with noise, industries characterized by high noise levels,
12 motorized vehicle manufacturers, transportation facilities, and
13 scientific research interests. The department may retain independent
14 consultants for technical elements of health effects analyses.

15 (2) The department shall provide for public participation in the
16 development of the report, including one or more public forums and the
17 provision of an opportunity for public review and comment upon a draft
18 report.

19 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** The sum of forty-five thousand dollars, or
20 as much thereof as may be necessary, is appropriated for the fiscal
21 year ending June 30, 2000, from the general fund to the department of
22 health for the purposes of this act. The department may contract with
23 another entity to complete portions of the study provisions in this
24 act, but any contract may not allow greater than twenty-five percent of
25 the total contract amount for indirect costs.

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