

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5764

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Government Operations & Elections, March 4, 2003

Title: An act relating to fluoridation of public water systems.

Brief Description: Establishing approval requirement for fluoridation of public water systems.

Sponsors: Senators Roach, T. Sheldon, Swecker, Winsley, Rasmussen and Franklin.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Government Operations & Elections: 2/19/03, 3/4/03 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ELECTIONS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5764 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Roach, Chair; Stevens, Vice Chair; Fairley, Kastama and Reardon.

Staff: Mac Nicholson (786-7445)

Background: The State Board of Health is the state agency charged with protecting the public health and is required to adopt rules necessary to assure safe and reliable public drinking water. Local health boards, as established by law, are required to enforce all rules adopted by the state board of health, and can enact local rules and regulations as necessary to preserve, promote and improve the public health.

A variety of entities, including municipal corporations, firms, companies, mutual or cooperative associations, institutions, partnerships, or persons may own and operate public water supply systems. Those entities must comply with rules and regulations made by the state board of health and local health boards.

A water-sewer district can fluoridate its water supply system only upon a majority vote of its board of commissioners, who can put the proposition to a vote of electors in the district.

Summary of Substitute Bill: A group A water system, as defined in RCW 70.119.020, not currently adding fluoridation compounds to its water can add such compounds only upon an affirmative vote of the system's customers or the system's elected local governing body. A group A water system is a system with 15 or more service connections regardless of the number of people; or a system serving an average of 25 or more people per day for 60 or more days within a calendar year regardless of the number of service connections. A group A system does not include a system serving fewer than 15 single-family residences, regardless of the number of people.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The substitute bill declares an emergency and narrows application of the bill to group A water systems as defined in RCW 70.119.020.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Testimony For: The decision to fluoridate water should be made by the people actually using the water and not by a nonelected board. Adding fluoridation is an expensive process and public water systems should not have to spend the money unless their customers are willing to pay.

Testimony Against: Fluoridation of water promotes public health.

Testified: PRO: Steve Lindstrom, Sno-King Water District Coalition; Jeff Johnson, Spanaway Water Company; Don Nelson, Mt. View-Edgewood Water; Mark Hullinger, Water Co-op of Pierce County and Lakewood Water District; Marianne Lincoln, Citizens Opposed to Fluoridation in Pierce County; Elaine Lewis; CON: David Michener, Washington State Dental Association.