
**Select Committee on
Environmental Health**

HB 2185

Brief Description: Reducing the levels of benzene in groundwater and drinking water.

Sponsors: Representatives Hudgins, Chase, Morrell, Campbell, Wood, Ormsby and Goodman.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Prohibits a person from importing, selling, dispensing, or offering for sale in Washington any motor fuel that contains greater than 0.62 percent by volume of benzene, if that motor fuel may spill or leak into ground or surface waters in Washington.

Hearing Date: 2/20/07

Staff: Amy McCormick (786-7290).

Background:

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) adopted a rule on February 9, 2007 on the Control of Hazardous Air Pollutants from Mobile Sources, which regulates several hazardous air pollutants, including benzene. The rule sets a national average refinery standard for benzene content of 0.62 percent by volume on all gasoline, beginning in 2011. This standard will be coupled with an averaging, banking, and trading program. The rule also establishes a maximum average standard of 1.3 percent benzene in gasoline starting July 1, 2012.

Benzene is formed from both natural processes and human activities. Benzene is a component in gasoline, diesel fuel, and aviation fuel. As a known carcinogen classified by the EPA, benzene is linked to leukemia, especially in children, as well as other health issues. Benzene may spill or leak into Washington groundwaters from underground storage tanks, landfills or gasoline pipelines. Groundwater that is contaminated with benzene may contaminate the public drinking water supply or be otherwise consumed by humans.

Summary of Bill:

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Motor fuel is defined as any gasoline, diesel fuel or any other inflammable gas or liquid, that is primarily used for the propulsion of motor vehicles or motorized vessels. Groundwaters are defined as waters that exist beneath the land surface or beneath the bed of any stream, lake or reservoir, or other body of surface water within the boundaries of this state.

A person is prohibited from importing, selling, dispensing or offering for sale in Washington, any motor fuel that contains greater than .62 percent by volume of benzene, if that motor fuel may spill or leak into any groundwaters or surface waters in Washington.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 12, 2007.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.