

FINAL BILL REPORT

SHB 2261

C 339 L 07

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Providing for the evaluation of additional measures to reduce wood smoke emissions.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Select Committee on Environmental Health (originally sponsored by Representatives Campbell, Hudgins, Morrell, Hunt and Ormsby).

House Select Committee on Environmental Health
Senate Committee on Water, Energy & Telecommunications

Background:

Nearly half of Washington's households have wood burning devices. During the past 20 to 25 years, the number of wood stoves, fireplaces, pellet stoves, and fireplace inserts in Washington has grown rapidly. Wood burning units can emit hundreds of times more pollution than other forms of heat such as natural gas, electricity, or oil.

Washington's wood heat regulation implements the 1991 Legislature's Clean Air Washington Act. This legislation restricts indoor burning, tightens emission standards for new wood stoves and other solid fuel burning devices, and emphasizes education and enforcement to control wood stove pollution.

Since 1997, all fireplaces offered for sale in Washington must meet certification standards comparable to wood stove standards. Masonry fireplaces must also meet design standards that achieve similar emission reductions. The State Building Code Council devised fireplace construction standards and testing methods to meet this emission requirement.

In September 2006 the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency issued revised national air quality standards for fine particle pollution (PM_{2.5} – particles 2.5 micrometers in diameter and smaller). This strengthened the previous daily fine particle standard from 65 micrograms of particles per cubic meter to 35 micrograms of particles per cubic meter of air. This standard increases protection of the public from short-term exposure to fine particles.

Some communities are unable to meet these new standards, primarily because of wood smoke emissions. The current strategies are not sufficient to reduce wood smoke emissions to levels which comply with the federal standards or adequately protect public health.

Summary:

The Legislature finds that it is in the state's interest and to the benefit of the people of the state to evaluate additional measures to reduce wood smoke emissions and update the state wood smoke control program.

Until June 30, 2009, the Spokane County Air Pollution Control Authority may determine by rule alternative trigger levels for impaired air quality.

The Department of Ecology (DOE) must convene and chair a work group to study the impacts of wood smoke from solid fuel burning devices and make recommendations to the Legislature on opportunities to reduce exposure to wood smoke and meet the new national air quality standards for fine particulates in Washington. Members of the work group must be appointed by the Director of the DOE and include representatives of:

- the DOE;
- the state Department of Health;
- regional air quality agencies;
- local health departments;
- related industry representatives; and
- nongovernmental health organizations.

Recommendations may include statutory or regulatory changes, incentives, and other strategies that will reduce particulate matter pollution, and should be presented to the Governor and the Legislature by December 1, 2007.

The work group must include at least the following considerations:

- communities in the state that have elevated levels of PM2.5 pollution;
- the contribution of pollution from solid fuel burning devices to potential violations of federal air quality standards;
- strategies used in other states, regions, or cities to reduce wood smoke pollution levels and the effectiveness of these strategies;
- state laws, rules, fees, utility regulations, and other policies that may affect the ability to reduce emissions from solid fuel burning devices or encourage the use of cleaner burning devices; and
- potential financial incentives and sources of funding to change out older solid fuel burning devices to cleaner burning devices.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	64	31	
Senate	36	12	(Senate amended)
House	67	28	(House concurred)

Effective: July 22, 2007