

FINAL BILL REPORT

ESHB 2785

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Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Ensuring that restrictions on the use of solid fuel burning devices do not prohibit the installation or replacement of solid fuel burning devices or the use of these devices during temporary outages of other sources of heat.

Sponsors: House Committee on Environment (originally sponsored by Representatives Shea, Short, Schmick, Taylor, Scott and McCaslin).

House Committee on Environment
Senate Committee on Energy, Environment & Telecommunications

Background:

Clean Air Emissions Standards.

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) may designate an area of nonattainment if there is a pattern of failure to reach and maintain ambient air quality standards over a period of time. When an area is designated as a nonattainment area, the state in which the area is located must submit an implementation plan (SIP) to reach attainment. This designation can cause additional requirements for all sources emitting fine particulate matter, including industrial and household sources.

Woodstoves and Other Solid Fuel Burning Devices.

Washington's Clean Air Act regulates uses of wood stoves and fireplaces, both of which are captured under the term "solid fuel burning device." A solid fuel burning device is defined as any device for burning wood, coal, or any other nongaseous and nonliquid fuel, including a woodstoves or fireplaces.

Since 1995 state law has restricted the sale of certain types of solid fuel burning devices that are not certified by the state or the EPA as meeting fine particulate matter emissions criteria. In addition, the state building code does not allow the inclusion of uncertified woodstoves and fireplaces in new construction. The emissions criteria that are currently required of solid fuel burning devices are specific to different technologies. For example, a fine particulate matter emissions standard of 2.5 grams per hour applies to catalytic woodstoves, while a limit of 4.5 grams per hour applies to pellet stoves.

Burn Bans.

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.

In Washington, the ECY or the local air pollution control authority may impose a burn ban when it forecasts that fine particulate pollution levels in an area will exceed the federal 24-hour standard of 35 micrograms per cubic meter, or a standard of 30 micrograms per cubic meter in areas at risk for federal nonattainment designations.

Burn bans are tiered, so the ECY or the local air pollution control authority will typically first call a Stage One burn ban. If this first stage of impaired air quality has been in force and has not achieved sufficient reductions, and a forecast is made that fine particulate pollution levels will exceed the federal 24-hour standard of 25 micrograms per cubic meter, a Stage Two burn ban may be called. Under certain circumstances, ECY or the local air pollution control authority may call a Stage Two burn ban without first calling a Stage One burn ban.

The use of uncertified woodstoves and fireplaces is restricted during a Stage One burn ban, and any burning of wood in a solid fuel burning device is restricted during a Stage Two burn ban.

Governor's Authority to Call an Emergency.

The Governor may declare a state of emergency in the area of the state affected by a riot, energy emergency, public disorder, or disaster that affects life, health, property, or the public peace. A state of emergency must be issued by a written proclamation and applies only to the geographic area specified in the proclamation.

An emergency proclamation enables the Governor to prohibit specific activities, such as public gatherings, transfer of combustible materials, public possession of firearms, and the use of public streets at any time during the state of emergency. In a state of emergency, the Governor may also prohibit activities as the Governor reasonably believes are necessary to help preserve and maintain life, health, property, or the public peace.

Summary:

Restrictions on Solid Fuel Burning Devices during Burn Bans.

Regardless of whether a burn ban has been called for a particular geographic area, a person may install or repair a certified solid fuel burning device that meets ECY emissions requirements in a home or a business, or may replace an uncertified device with a certified device. A person may also temporarily install, repair, or replace any type of solid fuel burning device for the duration of an emergency power outage. During emergency power outages, burning wood in a solid fuel burning device is unrestricted regardless of whether a burn ban has been called.

An emergency power outage is defined to include: natural and human-caused events outside of a person's control that leave a home or business temporarily without an adequate alternative source of heat; or an emergency declared by the Governor for an area on the basis of disaster, public disorder, or an energy emergency.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	97	0
Senate	48	0

Effective: July 9, 2016