

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5571

As of February 15, 2017

Title: An act relating to school composting and recycling.

Brief Description: Requiring composting and recycling in public schools.

Sponsors: Senators Palumbo, Hunt, Hobbs, Billig, Rivers, Mullet, Saldaña and Kuderer.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 2/14/17.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires public schools to offer students the opportunity to compost their food waste and to recycle.
- Mandates that the state provide free pickup of compost and provide supplies such as bins and compost bags.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Staff: Ailey Kato (786-7434)

Background: Recycling and composting are regulated by local governments. Each county and city is required to make a comprehensive solid waste management plan that includes, among other things, handling and proper preparation of materials for reuse or recycling and organic materials for composting or anaerobic digestion.

The Department of Ecology, the Department of Agriculture (Agriculture), and the Utilities and Transportation Commission (UTC) must review local solid waste management plans. Agriculture reviews preliminary draft plans for compliance with state laws regarding insect pests and plant diseases. UTC reviews preliminary draft plans to assess the cost of solid waste collection and its impacts on rates charged by regulated solid waste collection companies. Once approved, each local solid waste management plan must be reviewed and revised periodically.

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.

Summary of Bill: All public schools must offer students the opportunity to compost their food waste. School districts must have the choice to either provide on-site composting or contracting out with the local waste management company.

All public schools in the state must offer their students the opportunity to recycle.

The state must provide free pickup of compost and provide supplies such as bins and compost bags for all public schools that do not currently have the pickup and supplies needed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Much of lunchroom waste can be diverted from a landfill through composting, which can save schools money and help the environment. The success of composting programs at individual schools shows that they can be expanded throughout the state. School composting programs have educational benefits for students in all grades including raising awareness about the environment and waste, and they can connect scientific curriculum to other subject areas. Composting has many benefits to the environment such as addressing climate change; improving soil structure; and reducing erosion, run-off, and water loss. Some schools in Eastern Washington do not have access to composting pick-up, but they can have on-site or local composting. Janitors may be resistant to composting programs, but once they participate in these programs, they will see that it is not extra work. Composting at school can help change individual families and communities. The bill could be changed to require composting where it is available.

OTHER: This bill raises some practical implications with implementation. Not all school districts have access to recycling and composting pick up and facilities. Food waste managed on-site must be handled correctly to avoid health problems on school campuses. Any practices developed on school campuses must be sustainable.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Guy Palumbo, Prime Sponsor; Michael Moran, TVW's Capitol Classroom and Lake Washington High School; Lizzie Beausussun, student; Madison Miller, student; Henry Arnold, student; Alex Lyon, student.

OTHER: Vicki Christophersen, Washington Refuse and Recycling Association; Nancy Johns, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.