
Environment & Energy Committee

HB 1293

Brief Description: Concerning litter.

Sponsors: Representatives Klicker, Dye, Connors, Barkis, Eslick, Caldier and Kloba.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Raises the penalty for littering to a class 2 civil infraction, assessed separately from the existing penalty for dropped or thrown materials onto state highways.
- Creates a task force to reduce littering and litter and report task force findings.

Hearing Date: 1/21/25

Staff: Jacob Lipson (786-7196) and Srinandan Ramachandran (786-7291).

Background:

The Waste Reduction, Recycling, and Litter Control Act (Act) prohibits littering and establishes statewide programs to prevent and clean up litter, reduce waste, and increase recycling. Additionally, the Act directs the Department of Ecology (Ecology) to control and remove litter. Littering rules are enforced by law enforcement, fire wardens, and certain state employees.

Littering less than or equal to one cubic foot is a class 3 civil infraction with a base penalty of \$50. Furthermore, throwing or dropping material onto state highways is a separate traffic infraction with a base penalty of \$93.

State civil infractions are divided into four levels. Class 1 is the most serious and carries the highest fine, while class 4 is the least serious and carries the lowest fine.

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

Summary of Bill:

Littering in an amount less than or equal to one cubic foot is raised to a class 2 civil infraction, with a base penalty of \$125. This penalty is in addition to the base penalty of \$93 issued for throwing or dropping material onto state highways.

Ecology is directed to convene a task force to provide policy recommendations with the goal of ensuring a net decrease in litter. Ecology may contract with an independent third-party facilitator to convene the task force.

This task force must include one member from the following entities:

- Ecology;
- the Department of Transportation (WSDOT);
- the State Patrol;
- the Washington State Association of Counties;
- the Department of Natural Resources (DNR);
- the Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW); and
- associations representing:
 - solid waste collection and management companies;
 - retail groceries;
 - hospitality businesses;
 - convenience stores;
 - tourism;
 - beverage producers;
 - tobacco product manufacturers; and
 - the Washington State Association of Counties.

This task force must at minimum, consider four factors when developing policy recommendations: (1) the results of Ecology's 2022 statewide litter study; (2) how to reduce litter at specific public sites; (3) how to reduce the most common types of litter; and (4) how to reduce the cost-per-mile of litter cleanup along state roadways and the root causes of why the average amount of litter per mile far exceeds the average amount of litter per mile along roadways in other states.

Ecology must submit a status update to the appropriate committees of the legislature by January 15, 2026, and a final report consisting of the recommendations of the task force by November 15, 2026.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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