

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1293

As Reported by House Committee On:
Environment & Energy

Title: An act relating to litter.

Brief Description: Concerning litter.

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

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Environment & Energy: 1/21/25, 2/4/25 [DP].

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.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT & ENERGY

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 19 members: Representatives Doglio, Chair; Hunt, Vice Chair; Dye, Ranking Minority Member; Klicker, Assistant Ranking Member; Abbarno, Abell, Barnard, Berry, Duerr, Fey, Fitzgibbon, Kloba, Ley, Mendoza, Ramel, Street, Stuebe, Wylie and Ybarra.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Mena and Stearns.

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

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.

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 1 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.

Summary of Bill:

Littering in an amount less than or equal to 1 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;
- the Washington State Patrol;
- the Washington State Association of Counties;
- the Department of Natural Resources;
- the Department of Fish and Wildlife;
- 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.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Washington has a major problem with litter and the state has a relatively low penalty for littering. A higher penalty for littering will hopefully deter littering. Convening this task force will lead to productive conversation and new solutions, but more efforts are still needed to properly manage waste.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Mark Klicker, prime sponsor; Susan Vossler, Eastside Litter Busters; Katie Beeson, Washington Food Industry Association (WFIA); and Heather Trim, Zero Waste Washington.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.