

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5418

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Agriculture & Agricultural Trade & Development, February 21, 1995

Title: An act relating to weights and measures enforcement for scanners.

Brief Description: Enhancing weights and measures enforcement regarding scanners.

Sponsors: Senators Fraser, Wood, Wojahn and Prentice.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Agriculture & Agricultural Trade & Development: 2/2/95, 2/21/95 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & AGRICULTURAL TRADE & DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5418 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Rasmussen, Chair; Loveland, Vice Chair; Bauer, Morton, Newhouse and Snyder.

Staff: Erika Lim (786-7488)

Background: An increasing number of retailers use scanners or scanning guns at checkout points. There are currently no regulations to ensure that scanning devices record the correct item or charge the correct price.

Summary of Substitute Bill: "Point of sale" systems are defined as devices or cash registers that retrieve stored information relating to prices. The inspection procedure for point of sale devices is the procedure recommended by the National Conference on Weights and Measures. The department may change this procedure by following the notice and hearing provisions established in the bill.

Electronic scanners installed after January 1, 1996, must have screens visible to consumers as they stand at the checkout point.

The results of an inspection are not publicly released for 10 days after inspection. Civil penalties are established for violations of this act.

The department establishes a complaint-filing procedure and more closely monitors retailers against which complaints have been filed.

The department reports on the scanner program by December 15 of even-numbered years. This provision expires on January 1, 2000.

The program is funded out of the general fund appropriation to the weights and measures program.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The program is now funded from a general fund appropriation. There is no annual fee. Civil penalties are increased.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 25, 1995.

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

Testimony For: This bill will provide consumer protection and will promote fair business competition.

Testimony Against: Consumers also have a responsibility to check the receipts and bring their concerns directly to the retailer.

Testified: Senator Fraser, prime sponsor; Robert Lynch, AARP (pro); Dick Selander, City of Seattle Dept. of Finance (pro); Doug Mills, Assoc. Grocers; Jake Myers, Everybodies, Elma; Bob Arrington, WSDA (pro); Lisa Thatcher, Washington State Food Dealers.