

STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Health Care

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: No Revenue Impact

Action Date: 04/20/15

Action: Do Pass With Amendments. (Printed A-Eng.)

Meeting Dates: 04/01, 04/20

Vote:

Yeas: 5 - Knopp, Kruse, Monnes Anderson, Shields, Steiner Hayward

Prepared By: Zena Rockowitz, Committee Administrator

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Requires Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to adopt rules requiring contractor to perform asbestos survey to determine whether a residence is insulated with asbestos prior to beginning demolition. Permits DEQ to establish procedures for conducting survey and exemptions.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Lead and asbestos as established health hazards
- Unregulated demolitions of older homes throughout Portland
- Impact on neighbors by dust and other emissions
- Agency's ability to inspect, monitor and enforce public health safety during demolitions
- Existence of renovation, repair and remodeling regulations

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT:

Replaces original measure.

BACKGROUND:

Asbestos is the name for naturally occurring fibrous minerals that are highly durable and heat resistant. Due to its properties, asbestos is often used in construction materials such as roofing shingles and cement siding. No amount of contact with asbestos is safe and exposure increases risk of developing lung cancer, asbestosis (disease of lungs), and mesothelioma. The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) regulates demolition of public and private buildings to ensure that before any facility is demolished, all asbestos is properly abated by certified personnel through inspection and safe removal. Such regulations are not in place for the demolition of residential properties. Homes built prior to 1990 have a high potential of containing asbestos materials and when demolitions occur, this can pose public health risks to neighbors.