

**2012 Joint Agency Request Legislation**  
**Low-Level Radioactive Waste Site Use Permits**  
**HB 2304/Z-0808.1**

**Overview**

The Department of Health and the Department of Ecology are proposing legislation to transfer authority for the Low-Level Radioactive Waste Site Use Permit Program from Department of Ecology to Department of Health.

**Background**

The commercial low-level radioactive waste (LLRW) disposal site is located near the center of Hanford and is operated by US Ecology, Inc. The site has been in operation since 1965 and is the only site in Washington State accepting commercial LLRW.

The Department of Health and the Department of Ecology currently share regulatory oversight of the low-level radioactive waste site.

Health's activities:

- Ensure the commercial disposal facility complies with applicable state and federal regulations and license requirements.
- Ensure site operations and closure protects public health.
- Inspect shipments of LLRW and approve disposal of waste into trenches.
- Site surveillance through a senior resident inspector.

Ecology's activities:

- Issue LLRW disposal site use permits (an annual permit for generators, packagers and brokers to dispose acceptable LLRW at the commercial disposal facility).
- Serve as Executive Director and Chair of the Northwest Interstate Compact (a cooperative effort of eight states to protect citizens, maintain economic viability, and share the responsibilities of LLRW management).

There are approximately 400 site use permits issued each year to generators, packagers and brokers of LLRW. In 2010, following the Governor's directive to consolidate agency functions, Department of Ecology and Department of Health entered into an Interagency Agreement allowing Department of Health to review site use permit applications. The interagency agreement anticipated the transfer of permitting authority would occur as part of the natural resources consolidation. Since existing statutes give only the Department of Ecology authority to issue permits, Department of Health currently only reviews the applications and makes a recommendation, but Ecology must issue the permit.



### **Summary of the Bill**

The proposal will amend chapter 43.200 RCW and chapter 70.98 RCW to transfer the authority for the Low-Level Radioactive Waste Site Use Permit Program from Department of Ecology to Department of Health. This will allow Department of Health to review permit applications and issue the site use permits.

### **Benefits of the Proposal**

Transferring the Site Use Permit Program activities to Department of Health is consistent with the Department's authority and responsibilities at the low-level radioactive waste site, and will streamline agency oversight.

### **For More Information**

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