

WASTE AVOIDANCE AND RESOURCE RECOVERY LEVY BILL 2007

Second Reading

Resumed from 17 October.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 3 put and passed.

Clause 4: Levy may be prescribed -

Mr G. SNOOK: I move -

Page 3, after line 1 - To insert -

- (a) apply to waste receivable sites other than those sites approved as Waste Resource Recovery Facilities; and

Dr S.C. THOMAS: This amendment tries to encourage resource recovery and recycling by not applying the levy specifically to a resource recovery and recycling unit, but by applying it to landfill. The member for Moore is attempting to reinforce and support the government's agenda by encouraging recycling and the diversion of waste products away from landfill. For that reason, I think the minister should seriously consider this amendment. Obviously, there is a potential detriment to this; that is, if it is successful and a lot of the waste goes into a resource recovery and recycling program, the waste levy will be dramatically diminished. That would not be a bad outcome. It would give positive encouragement, so for those reasons the minister should consider this amendment.

Mr G. SNOOK: I do not chew Minties while I am speaking; I have to deal with a frog in my throat! The intent of this amendment has been clearly elucidated by the Mintie-chewing member for Capel! It is the essence of this legislation; it encompasses the intent of it all and what we are supporting; namely, to encourage recycling and resource recovery and to save sending waste to landfill. It is the very essence of the whole object of the exercise. If we turn around and impose a levy across all facilities, this will not work. The minister highlighted that in his second reading speech, but he is not bound by his second reading speech. Although his words are on record, in my view it does not stack up as legislation, which this bill will implement. In essence, the minister's intent is honourable, and I respect him for it. I do not disbelieve him for one minute. However, we will all leave this place eventually. The intention needs to be made clear of what we are trying to achieve with this legislation, which is groundbreaking, as the minister outlined. As the member for Capel clearly explained to the house, if this amendment is not included, and something happens to the application of fees or levies across all facilities, it will not work, as we have all indicated in the discussion over the past couple of hours how we want it to work. I plead with the minister to accept that this amendment has merit. It clearly outlines where the levy should be applied.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I refer to my second reading speech. As I said, it is not anticipated the levy will be applied to alternative waste treatment or material sites. It is important that we understand that the scope of the drafting is intentional because it may be desirable in the future to impose a levy on hazardous or problematic wastes, for example. However, any proposed change will still need to go through the normal parliamentary scrutiny and consultation. If ministers or governments of the future have any intentions, that stakeholder consultation process exists, as does, of course, parliamentary scrutiny regarding changes to regulations.

Mr G. Snook: That is only by disallowance.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: It is still a process that is enshrined, and any change must be addressed through that process. As I say, it is not anticipated that the levy will be applied to alternative waste treatment or material recovery facilities at any stage. However, if government or future ministers seek to change how a levy is applied, those clear stakeholder consultations will need to occur and, ultimately, the consent of the Parliament will be required.

Amendment put and negated.

Dr S.C. THOMAS: In the second reading speech the minister did not give us an indication of the amount the current levy of \$6 a tonne provides as annual income and how much currently sits in the account. It is not called the waste management account; it has a different name. Can the minister give an indication of what the income stream is and how much is sitting in the account as an asset?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Currently, the rate is set at \$6 a tonne for putrescible waste and \$3 a cubic metre for inert waste. The annual amount achieved through the levy currently is between \$12 million and \$13 million. The current amount in the account is \$20 million.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 5 and 6 put and passed.

Title put and passed.

Leave granted to proceed forthwith to third reading.

Third Reading

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah - Minister for the Environment) [10.16 pm]: I move -

That the bill be now read a third time.

DR S.C. THOMAS (Capel) [10.16 pm]: I thank the member for Moore for his work on this bill and his proposed amendment. The government does not take to opposition amendments very kindly. We appreciate the member for Moore's efforts. We will hold the minister to account over how he manages the money. We want money from the levy to go into active recycling services and not stuck in administration. As this process continues, that needs to change. We will hold the minister to account over that.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

House adjourned at 10.17 pm
