



Testimony on House Bill 2516
presented to
Federal and State Affairs Committee
by
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Chairman Ostmeyer and members of the committee; the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) is pleased to provide testimony in support of HB 2516 which proposes changes to the Asbestos Control Act. Specifically, this bill proposes to eliminate the redundant training and certification of individuals conducting asbestos abatement. These requirements duplicate or exceed existing federal requirements.

In 1985, in response to concerns about asbestos abatement in Kansas schools, the Kansas Legislature passed the Kansas asbestos statutes. The cost of insurance for schools had risen sharply during the 1980s so schools were scrambling to have their asbestos removed in order to reduce insurance costs. With no regulation in place, some asbestos abatement companies were doing sloppy work which resulted in more problems for the schools. This brought about concerns for the health of students and faculty in these school buildings.

The Kansas statutes required Kansas approved training as well as certification of workers until federal laws were established in 1990. At that point Kansas and most other states stopped using state established training requirements and instead relied on the federal law. Kansas did not halt the requirements for certification which was used to verify training had taken place. Now we are requesting through HB 2516 to have those provisions removed from state law due to redundancy with federal regulations. To be clear, this bill does not remove the need for worker training nor does it relax the training standards utilized today. This bill only seeks to remove redundant KDHE approval of asbestos training. There will be no change in the required training course material, number of training hours, or the exam required to successfully fulfill asbestos training requirements. (See Attached Table) This bill will remove the need for annual asbestos worker certifications through KDHE. Asbestos abatement companies will continue to be required to receive annual business licenses from KDHE, and must continue to verify that their workers are properly trained and have the course certificate of completion available for KDHE inspection.

Prior to amendment by the House Committee on Energy and Environment, this bill proposed that fees collected would be kept within the program area for funding the asbestos program.

Thank you for allowing me to explain the benefits of this bill. I will be happy to stand for questions.