
Detailed Fiscal Analysis

This bill redefines what animal wastes are included as infectious animal waste. Currently infectious animal wastes are pathological wastes that have been in contact with infectious agents, including animal tissues, organs, body parts, and body fluids, excreta, and carcasses; and the bedding of animals that may present a substantial threat to public health if improperly managed. This bill will redefine contaminated carcasses, body parts, and bedding of animals as infectious only if they have been exposed to a zoonotic agent. A zoonotic agent is a type of microorganism, helminth, or virus that can be transmitted to humans from animals.

This bill will result in savings for animal waste disposal for veterinarians because some of the animal waste that they generate will no longer be considered infectious waste. Only contaminated carcasses, body parts, and bedding of animals that have been exposed to a zoonotic agent must be treated as infectious waste. Under current law, a veterinary facility that generates less than fifty pounds of infectious waste each month has the option to dispose of the waste as noninfectious waste, or the generator can choose to use a registered transporter to take the waste to an infectious waste treatment facility. According to a spokesperson at the Ohio EPA, most small generators choose to use an infectious waste treatment facility to avoid any further liability with the waste. Generators of over fifty pounds of infectious waste per month are required to use a registered transporter and infectious waste treatment and disposal facility. The cost to dispose of the waste through a registered transporter and infectious waste treatment and disposal facility can vary, depending on the vendor. The average cost ranges \$0.25 to \$0.45 per pound of waste.

Veterinarians are not the only generators of infectious animal waste. Other generators of infectious animal waste are public hospitals or universities that do animal research. The Ohio State University (OSU) veterinarian research facility reports that this bill will save \$30,000 each year in animal bedding disposal. The medical research facility at OSU reports that it will save an additional \$40,000 each year. Because most of the animals used at OSU are laboratory rats, animal bedding consists mainly of wood chips or sawdust. Other public universities conducting animal research that will save between 50 to 60 percent of their waste disposal expenditures include the Medical College of Ohio at Toledo, the Northeastern Ohio Universities College of Medicine, Ohio University, and Wright State University. However, their laboratories do not generate as much infectious animal waste as OSU, and the savings for each university is expected to be approximately \$2,000 to \$5,000 each year.

City and county animal shelters do not expect to be affected by this bill. The animal wastes from these facilities are not currently regulated as infectious waste, and are not expected to change.

Hospital savings may vary, depending on the hospital policy and amounts of infectious waste that are produced. Children's Hospital must dispose of approximately 180 pounds of animal bedding each week, costing \$65. This bill could save the hospital \$3,380 each year in disposal costs. However, because of sanitary concerns, most hospitals reported that they would continue to dispose of their waste with their licensed transporter to avoid liability issues.

Large generators producing at least 50 pounds of infectious waste per month must pay a registration fee of \$300 to the Ohio EPA (SSR Fund 660) to operate for three years. There are currently 6 veterinarians who pay this fee, and this bill will probably exempt them from this requirement because they will probably no longer produce 50 pound of infectious animal waste. However, the universities and hospitals doing animal research are expected to continue paying the registration fee because they will continue to produce infectious waste in excess of 50 pounds, not including the waste that comes from animals. Therefore, the loss of revenue to SSR Fund 660 will be very minimal. Biennial appropriations to SSR Fund 660 are \$179,630 for the 1998 fiscal year, and \$120,480 for the 1999 fiscal year.

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