

Legislative Analysis



PUT ANTIQUE STEAM BOILER REP. ON BOARD OF BOILER RULES

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House Bill 4937 (Substitute H-1)
Sponsor: Rep. Bruce Caswell
Committee: Regulatory Reform
First Analysis (3-5-04)

BRIEF SUMMARY: The bill would amend the Boiler Act of 1965 to put an additional member on the Board of Boiler Rules, with that member to represent antique steam engine owners and operators.

FISCAL IMPACT: The bill would have no fiscal impact.

THE APPARENT PROBLEM:

Discussions over proposed new antique boiler safety rules have been going on since 2002 between state regulators responsible for steam boiler safety and representatives of owners and operators of antique steam boilers. Reportedly, some of the impetus for this stems from a fatal steam tractor explosion in Ohio in the summer of 2001. Antique steam boiler owners have been concerned that proposed new rules would be overly burdensome and make it extremely difficult to continue to engage in their hobby. These machines, including locomotive engines, tractors, steamrollers, and trucks, some dating back to the 19th Century, are displayed at shows engaged in plowing and threshing, as well as in other activities. Legislation has been under discussion for some time to protect this activity, and a compromise is said to have been reached that would give representatives of antique steam boilers a greater voice in the rule-making process.

THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:

The bill would amend the Boiler Act of 1965 to increase the size of the Board of Boiler Rules from 11 members to 12 members and require that one member be a representative of antique steam boiler owners and operators.

The bill also would redraft the definitions section of the act, primarily to put the definitions in alphabetical order.

MCL 408.752 et al.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

For information on shows featuring antique steam engines, including photographs of vintage machines, consult the web site of the Buckley Old Engine Show (www.buckleyoldengineshow.org).

ARGUMENTS:

For:

Having a representative on the Board of Boiler Rules will give owners and operators of antique steam boilers a more effective voice in the process of drafting the rules they must live under while practicing their hobby. Efforts have been underway to draft new rules for some time.

POSITIONS:

The Department of Labor and Economic Growth supports the bill. (2-24-04)

The Michigan Historical Steam Engine Association has indicated support for the bill. (2-24-04)

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