

**SUBJECT:** Extending intervals between boiler inspections

**COMMITTEE:** Economic Development — favorable, with amendment

**VOTE:** 7 ayes — Oliveira, Yarbrough, Greenberg, Luna, Raymond, Seaman, Siebert

0 nays

2 absent — Keffer, Van de Putte

**WITNESSES:** For — Dan Fox, TU Electric

Against — None

On — George Bynob, Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation

**BACKGROUND :** The Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR) requires that most boilers in Texas be registered and certified.

Power boilers, typically used by electrical utility companies to produce steam to generate power, and steam drums of unfired steam boilers, typically used by chemical, oil, and gas companies to transform waste heat into steam, must be inspected externally and internally each year to receive a certificate of operation.

Upon approval of TDLR and the agency that has inspection authority, the period between internal boiler inspections can be extended up to 24 months for power boilers and up to 60 months for unfired steam boilers.

**DIGEST:** HB 1836, as amended, would increase the allowable period between internal boiler inspections. Power boilers could go up to 48 months between inspections, while unfired steam boilers could go 84 months.

The bill would take effect September 1, 1997.

**SUPPORTERS SAY:** HB 1836 would give boiler operators more flexibility to coordinate internal boiler inspections with other planned routine maintenance and thus decrease the number of occasions for taking boilers off-line. This expensive procedure can cost companies anywhere from \$100,000 to \$500,000 for each day the boiler does not operate. HB 1836 would help companies make their operations more efficient and realize considerable savings, which could be passed on to consumers in the form of lower utility bills.

HB 1836 would only allow for extending inspection intervals if all licensing and regulatory agencies agreed to the extension. This would ensure proper oversight; strict boiler maintenance and monitoring would still be required for safe operation of a boiler. To qualify for an extension under existing law, companies have to keep a detailed log of repairs made, receive favorable recommendations during their last inspections, and monitor water quality. HB 1836 would do nothing to jeopardize these safety precautions; it would merely allow competent companies to better schedule inspections to meet operating requirements.

**OPPONENTS SAY:** No apparent opposition.

**NOTES:** The committee amendment would delete a reference to steam drums. The companion bill, CSSB 1065 by Carona, was reported favorably April 4 by the Senate State Affairs Committee and recommended for the Local and Uncontested Calendar.