



## Senate committee approves Canadian-drug plan

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The Senate Commerce and Labor Committee Friday voted 6-1 to recommend passage of the bill helping Nevadans find and purchase safe Canadian pharmaceuticals.

AB195, sponsored by Assembly Majority Leader Barbara Buckley, D-Las Vegas, would create a Web site designed to make sure Nevadans seeking cheaper prescription drugs from Canada are getting them from properly licensed and controlled pharmacies.

Buckley argued when she presented the bill that many Nevadans are already getting prescription drugs through the Internet - many times from unsafe sources in Third World countries. She said there is no guarantee that just because those Internet companies put a Canadian flag on their Web site that the drugs are actually coming from properly licensed pharmacies in that country.

People are being forced to the Internet for prescription drugs because prices are often half the price charged in the United States or less. But the U.S. government has refused to allow re-importation of those drugs by companies or state and local governments saying they may not be safe. But federal authorities have not attempted to block or arrest individuals importing Canadian drugs for personal use.

AB195 would require Nevada to investigate and license Canadian pharmacies to ensure products are safe. It would list those firms and Web sites on a Nevada Web site available to consumers.

Sen. Maggie Carlton, D-Las Vegas, said the purpose is to protect Nevada consumers from bad Web sites that send out diluted, contaminated or otherwise inferior drugs.

"I want to make sure people have safe drugs," she said.

Chairman Randolph Townsend, R-Reno, first suggested an amendment that would require the federal government give its OK before opening a state Web site.

Both Carlton and Buckley said that would kill the plan.

"It guts the bill because the feds are never going to issue a letter saying go ahead and do this," said Buckley.

Sen. Joe Heck, R-Las Vegas, a physician, proposed an amendment requiring that the drugs available through those Web sites be approved by the FDA.

"Stating that the drug has to be FDA approved takes care of all statutes except one - re-importation," said Heck.

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Buckley said she supports that amendment.

Only Sandra Tiffany, R-Henderson, opposed Heck's motion.

The bill goes to the Senate for a vote and Buckley said she thinks the bill will satisfy a majority of Senators, as well as the governor. She said supporters have made every effort to satisfy concerns raised - including that the state could be liable if there are problems with a prescription.

"The state does not accept liability if the pharmacy down the street gives you the wrong drug and the same applies here," she said.

She said she was particularly pleased by the support from Heck because he is a physician.

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