

## **COMMITTEE BILL ANALYSIS**

**Bill:** House Bill 1217

**Printer's No.:** 1580

**Sponsor:** Representative Stern

**Prepared by:** Gregg Warner

**Synopsis:** This bill amends section 4(1) of The Controlled Substance, Drug, Device and Cosmetic Act, 1972 Act 64, relating to prohibiting "bath salts" and synthetic marijuana.

**Summary:** The bill adds to the list of Schedule I controlled substances, certain compounds which are commonly marketed as "bath salts." The prohibition against using these illegal drugs will apply to substances which contain the core chemical molecules common in bath salts, regardless of any minor changes to the molecular structures attached to the core.

The bill also replaces the current language relating to synthetic marijuana and replaces it with new language defining these prohibited drugs in a manner which will apply the act to minor chemical changes to the core molecule.

**Effective date**

This act takes effect immediately.

**Background:** The House of Representatives passed House Bill 1217 on May 7, 2013 by a vote of 197 to 0.

The General Assembly enacted 2011 Act 7 to address these types of illegal drugs but according to the sponsor, "It seems that no sooner is a compound outlawed than new compounds appear. This problem is particularly true in the area of prohibited "bath salts" and synthetic marijuana. Additionally, the current language in the controlled substance act with regard to bath salts and synthetic marijuana has resulted in debate among chemists about what compounds found on the street are and are not included in the list of Schedule I banned substances.

To remedy these issues, I and House staff have worked with the Pennsylvania State Police (PSP) laboratory and other experts. PSP has recommended changes which clarify the list of prohibited substances while incorporating language from the federal Controlled Substances Act that will better address the law's ability to keep up with the small permutations in chemical formulas that home grown chemists readily produce to beat the system. This has also been vetted with the Philadelphia Police Department laboratory which is in agreement with the changes."