

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6447

As of January 22, 1996

Title: An act relating to water permit processing.

Brief Description: Changing procedures for investigating water permit applications.

Sponsors: Senators Fraser, Swecker and Rasmussen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Ecology & Parks: 1/22/96.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ECOLOGY & PARKS

Staff: Susan Ridgley (786-7444)

Background: The water right permitting process was first established in 1917. In 1993, a Water Right Fee Task Force developed recommendations for the Legislature on statutory changes to improve efficiency of water right permit process. Broad legislation containing the task force recommendations was submitted to both the 1994 and 1995 Legislatures, but was not enacted.

One of the issues addressed by the Task Force is that under current procedures, the type of information required on the application form is sometimes insufficient for the Department of Ecology's decisionmaking purposes.

Subsequently, concerned citizens have expressed frustration at the paucity and timing of information that is publicly released by the Department of Ecology about pending water rights decisions.

Summary of Bill: Applicants are required to file a completed application, and to provide additional information relevant to the application to assist Ecology in its investigation. Ecology is required to establish protocols for what information must be provided by the water rights applicants, and then review and verify the information provided.

Following their investigation and a preliminary decision, Ecology must make available to the public a summary of the "record of examination" (i.e. the proposed decision). The public has 60 days to submit comments on the record of examination, and Ecology must consider these comments in making its final decision.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 19, 1996.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.