

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Olympia Washington

Bil Analysis

Bil No. HB 2916

Discharges/Dairy Farm Disclosure
Brief title

Hrg Date: 2/4/98

Reps. Koster/Chandler
Sponsor

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BACKGROUND:

Information held by a public agency is generally subject to public disclosure. Numerous exemptions to the public disclosure requirements are recodified in statute. Some of these exemptions relate to records containing personal information and proprietary business information. State and local agencies are required to make records not falling within a statutory exemption available for public inspection and copying.

The Department of Ecology (DOE) is required to identify water quality problems related to dairy farm operations, investigate complaints regarding pollutant discharges from dairy farms, administer and enforce national pollutant discharge elimination system permits issued to dairy farms, and make annual reports regarding dairy waste pollution enforcement actions.

SUMMARY:

A new exemption is added to the public disclosure requirements.

Records regarding dairy farm owner's or operator's report to the DOE concerning discharge of manure or other dairy nutrients to state waters is not subject to public disclosure if the owner or operator states:

- the discharge was accidental and
- the owner or operator will take prompt corrective action to stop the discharge and prevent a recurrence.

If these requirements are satisfied, either the report of the discharge or the DOE's records related to the report are subject to disclosure.

Continued

The public disclosure exemption does not apply if the discharge was not accidental or if corrective action is not taken within 14 days of the date the discharge is reported.

FISCAL NOTE: Not Requested.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill passed.