

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5018

As of January 14, 1999

Title: An act relating to the permit assistance center.

Brief Description: Changing permit assistance center provisions.

Sponsors: Senators B. Sheldon, Fraser and Swecker.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Environmental Quality & Water Resources: 1/15/99.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY & WATER RESOURCES

Staff: Richard Ramsey (786-7412)

Background: The Permit Assistance Center was established within the Department of Ecology (DOE) by the Legislature in 1995 to provide assistance to businesses and public agencies in complying with the state's environmental quality laws. The center functions as a clearinghouse for information on environmental permits and, when requested, may function in a coordination role for specific projects. The 1995 legislation provided for sunset of the center on June 30, 1999.

In a sunset review of the center, the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee: (1) found that DOE had complied with the Legislature's intent in establishing the center and in implementing the coordinated permit process; (2) made recommendations for improving the center's efficiency and effectiveness including modifying the center's reporting requirements; and (3) recommended re-authorizing the center.

Summary of Bill: The Permit Assistance Center is re-authorized and the sunset provisions are repealed. The center's reporting requirements are changed from annual to periodic and are focused on making recommendations for streamlining and coordinating environmental permitting and documenting the center's performance. The timing of negotiating for coordinated permitting services is modified.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 8, 1999.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed, except that Section 4, repealing the sunset provisions, is effective June 30, 1999.