

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SJM 8012

As Passed House

April 19, 1991

Brief Description: Petitioning the United States state department to appeal to British Columbia to stem the flow of raw sewage into the strait of Juan de Fuca.

Sponsor(s): Senators Talmadge, Conner, Metcalf, Thorsness, McMullen, Oke and Craswell.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:

Environmental Affairs, April 2, 1991, DP;

Passed House, April 19, 1991, 97-0.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS**

Majority Report: *Do pass.* Signed by 12 members: Representatives Rust, Chair; Valle, Vice Chair; Horn, Ranking Minority Member; Bray; Brekke; G. Fisher; Neher; Phillips; Pruitt; D. Sommers; Sprenkle; and Van Luven.

Minority Report: *Do not pass.* Signed by 1 member: Representative Edmondson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member.

Staff: Harry Reinert (786-7110).

Background: The Strait of Juan de Fuca forms part of the boundary between the United States and Canada. The Strait provides economic, social and environmental links between the Province of British Columbia and state of Washington.

Federal and state laws require local governments to comply with standards for discharges into the water. A number of cities in the state of Washington are upgrading to secondary treatment of their wastewater effluent before discharging it into the Strait of Juan de Fuca.

In British Columbia, Victoria area municipalities are not required to treat sewage before it is discharged. These municipalities serve an estimated 230,000 residents. There are plans to extend a Victoria area sewage outfall line into the Strait.

The United States and Canada entered into a treaty in 1909 to resolve disputes over boundary waters. The treaty provides for an International Joint Commission to advise the two countries on issues involving boundary waters.

Summary of Bill: The United States Department of State is requested to make an appeal to the Department of External Affairs of Canada to protect the Strait of Juan de Fuca and to begin efforts to cease the dumping of raw sewage into the Strait. The International Joint Commission established under the boundary waters treaty of 1909 is requested to investigate the issue.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: Discharging of raw, untreated sewage into the Strait of Juan de Fuca from the greater Victoria, British Columbia area is detrimental to water quality and adversely affects human health and the environment. The cities and industries in the state of Washington have invested millions of dollars in wastewater treatment facilities to protect the Strait. The British Columbia municipalities should also provide the same level of protection.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Senator Paul Conner (pro).