

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SHB 1357

As Amended by the Senate

Title: An act relating to public water supply system operators.

Brief Description: Modifying certification of public water supply system operators.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Environmental Affairs (originally sponsored by Representatives Rust, Horn, Roland and Valle; by request of Department of Health).

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Environmental Affairs, February 11, 1993, DPS;
Appropriations, February 24, 1993, DPS(ENA);
Passed House, March 13, 1993, 75-21;
Amended by Senate.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Rust, Chair; Flemming, Vice Chair; Horn, Ranking Minority Member; Bray; Foreman; Hansen; Holm; L. Johnson; J. Kohl; and Linville.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 4 members: Representatives Van Luven, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Edmondson; Roland; and Sheahan.

Staff: Harry Reinert (786-7110).

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: The substitute bill by Committee on Environmental Affairs be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 20 members: Representatives Locke, Chair; Valle, Vice Chair; Carlson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Appelwick; Ballasiotes; Basich; Cooke; Dellwo; Dorn; Dunshee; G. Fisher; Jacobsen; Lemmon; Leonard; Linville; Rust; Sehlin; Sommers; Wang; and Wolfe.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 5 members: Representatives Silver, Ranking Minority Member; Morton; Sheahan; Stevens; and Talcott.

Staff: Maureen Morris (786-7152).

Background: Public water systems having 100 or more connections, or having 15 or more connections and using a surface water supply, are required to have a certified operator. The Department of Health and the water and wastewater operator certification board of examiners oversee the operator certification process. Fees for operator certification are established by the department based on the cost to the department of running the certification program. Operator certification fees are deposited in the general fund.

Summary of Bill: The waterworks operator certification account is established. All fees received by the Department of Health for water system operator certification are deposited in the account. The account is subject to appropriation.

The Department of Health may assess fees on public water systems, in addition to fees on certified operators, to operate the water system operator certification program. The department shall establish two schedules of fees, one for applicants for certified operator and one for public water systems, to pay for the program.

EFFECT OF SENATE AMENDMENT(S): The Senate amendment creates a drinking water assistance account. Funds in the account could be spent by the Department of Health or the Public Works Board only after appropriation. The department is directed to establish by January 1, 1994 guidelines for grants and loans from the account. The board is directed to establish a financial assistance program for drinking water systems. These provisions are declared an emergency and shall take effect immediately.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: (Environmental Affairs): The need for high quality water systems operators is essential. This bill will make the certification program self-supporting. Public water systems, which benefit from the certified operators, are willing to pay part of the cost of the program.

(Appropriations): The certification of water works operators is important to the quality of drinking water in this state. This bill puts the financing for certification on a stable basis. The people who will pay the fees support the bill.

Testimony Against: (Environmental Affairs): None.

(Appropriations): None.

Witnesses: (Environmental Affairs): Denise Lahmann, City of Centralia (pro); B. David Clark, Department of Health (pro); Russell W. Glaser, Certification Board (pro); Pat Wiles, Harbor Water (pro); Bert Lysen, Washington State Association of Water (pro); and Joe Daniels, Washington State Association of Water (pro).

(Appropriations): Joe Daniels, Washington State Water Works Association (pro); and Dave Clark, Department of Health (pro).

VOTE ON FINAL PASSAGE:

Yeas 75; Nays 21; Excused 2

Nays: Representatives Ballard, Casada, Dyer, Edmondson, Finkbeiner, Fuhrman, Lisk, Mastin, Mielke, Morton, Reams, Roland, Schmidt, Schoesler, Sheahan, Silver, Stevens, Tate, Thomas, Vance, Van Luven

Excused: Representatives Leonard, Padden