

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESHB 1442

AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & UTILITIES, APRIL 1, 1993

Brief Description: Creating the water resources policy commission.

SPONSORS: House Committee on Natural Resources & Parks (originally sponsored by Representatives R. Johnson, Roland and J. Kohl)

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES & PARKS

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & UTILITIES

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Sutherland, Chairman; Jesernig, Vice Chairman; Amondson, Hochstatter, McCaslin, Owen, Roach, A. Smith, Vognild, and Williams.

Staff: Erika Lim (786-7488)

Hearing Dates: March 29, 1993; April 1, 1993

BACKGROUND:

Water resources are managed by a number of different agencies and local governments. This has caused uncoordinated, inconsistent, and conflicting policies, as well as delays in decision making due to questions of authority.

Demands on water resources have risen and continue to rise through increased residential, business, industrial, and agricultural uses.

SUMMARY:

The Washington Water Resources Policy Commission is created to comprehensively review and make recommendations on water resources management.

The commission will have up to 20 members: the Governor or a representative; three members from the House of Representatives (the chairs of the Agriculture and Rural Development and the Natural Resources and Parks Committees, and the minority leader); three members of the Senate (the chairs of the Ecology and Parks and the Energy and Utilities Committees, and the minority leader); no more than three members of federally recognized Indian tribes; three representatives of local governments; no more than seven members to represent agriculture from both sides of the Cascades, environmental organizations, commercial timber

landowners, nonindustrial small timber landowners, fisheries and wildlife, and utilities.

The commission will convene at the call of the Governor, who will be chair of this commission. The Governor will provide staff; the Commissioner of Public Lands and the Attorney General will ensure that assigned staff has expertise in the matters before the commission.

The commission will recognize and coordinate with the Department of Ecology water resources program and any advisory bodies to that program.

The commission will conduct a comprehensive review of and make recommendations on governance and funding issues in water resources management. It will meet at least monthly. Its report to the Legislature is due by November 1, 1994, and will allow inclusion of a minority report.

This act and the commission will expire December 31, 1996.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED SENATE AMENDMENT:

Everything after the enacting clause is stricken.

The Water Resources Policy Commission will have between 22 and 27 members: the Governor; five House members, with at least two from each party; five Senators, with at least two from each party; five executive appointees to represent water-related responsibilities; five members from local governments; the Commissioner of Public Lands; and up to five representatives of federally recognized Indian tribes.

The commission will convene at the call of the Governor. The legislative members will elect a chair from among the members of the commission. The Legislature will provide the staff, with the Governor, the Commissioner of Public Lands, and the Attorney General cooperating. The Governor will make appointments within 90 days.

The commission will determine the procedures for conducting its activities. It will develop a work plan and submit this plan to the fiscal committees of the Legislature and to OFM by December 1, 1993. The commission will periodically report to the Governor and the Legislature. The final report is due November 1, 1994 and shall allow inclusion of a minority report.

The commission will meet at least quarterly.

The commission's duties are to review all water resources programs and policies, including allocation, funding, governance, regional planning, and conservation. The commission is also given the authority to examine any non-enumerated water resources-related issues it finds relevant.

The commission will recognize and coordinate with the Department of Ecology's Water Resources Program and its advisory committee, the forum.

This act and the commission will expire December 31, 1996.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: available

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

TESTIMONY FOR:

Water issues must be comprehensively examined now, and the Legislature must play an important role.

TESTIMONY AGAINST:

This issue needs to be addressed with action, not a study group.

TESTIFIED: Senator Barr (pro); Conrad Hermsted (con); Signed up but did not testify: Joe Daniels, WA State Assn. of Water/Wastewater Dist. (pro); Ken Slattery, Dept. of Ecology (pro); Marlyta Deck, WA Cattlemen's Assn. (con); Kathleen Collins, Assn. of WA Cities (pro); Dave Arbaugh, WA PUD Assn. (pro); Bob Mack, City of Seattle Water Dept. (pro)