

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5236

AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS, FEBRUARY 24, 1993

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

SPONSORS: Senators Fraser, Barr, Sutherland, Owen and Winsley; by request of Department of Health

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ECOLOGY & PARKS

Majority Report: Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Fraser, Chairman; Deccio, McCaslin, Moore, Sutherland, and Talmadge.

Staff: Cathy Baker (786-7708)

Hearing Dates: January 25, 1993; February 8, 1993

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Rinehart, Chairman; Spanel, Vice Chairman; Bauer, Bluechel, Cantu, Hargrove, Hochstatter, Jesernig, Moyer, Quigley, Snyder, Sutherland, Talmadge, and West.

Staff: Cindi Holmstrom (786-7715)

Hearing Dates: February 17, 1993; February 24, 1993

BACKGROUND:

Washington law requires that a public water system have a certified operator if the system has at least 100 connections or if it uses a surface water supply that must be filtered and serves at least 25 individuals. Approximately 700 public water systems meet these criteria.

The federal Safe Drinking Water Act requires that each state certify the operators of federally-regulated public water systems that have a groundwater source which may become polluted from surface water. Federally-regulated systems are those that have 15 or more connections or that serve an average of 25 or more persons per day.

Certificates are issued to individuals who pass a written examination, pay a fee, and otherwise meet the Department of Health's requirements. Certificates are renewable annually.

Existing certification fees cover a portion of the cost of administering the operator certification program; these fees are currently returned to the state general fund.

SUMMARY:

The Department of Health is authorized to establish a schedule of fees to be assessed to 1) certified operators or those applying to become certified operators; and 2) public water systems. In total, these fees shall be sufficient to meet the costs of the waterworks operator certification program.

A waterworks operator certification account is created. Fees collected under the act will be deposited into this account. Moneys from the account may be used by the Department of Health to carry out the purposes of the waterworks certification program.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: yes

Fiscal Note: available

TESTIMONY FOR:

The certification program is required by both state and federal law and is effective in ensuring safe drinking water. Existing fees are not adequate to cover the cost of the certification program. The fee structure should be modified to reflect actual services provided, including services to water systems.

TESTIMONY AGAINST: None

TESTIFIED (Ecology & Parks): PRO: Denise Lahmann, City of Centralia; Dave Clark, Hal Dygert, Department of Health; Dave Siburg, Kitsap County PUD

TESTIFIED (Ways & Means): PRO: Senator Fraser, prime sponsor; David Monthie, Department of Health; Cheryl Beringer, Department of Health; Kathleen Collins, Association of Washington Cities; Joe Daniels, Washington State Water/Wastewater Association