

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1489

As Reported By House Committee On:

Agriculture & Ecology

Title: An act relating to public works and water pollution control funding.

Brief Description: Modifying public works and water pollution control funding.

Sponsors: Representatives Chandler, Linville, L. Thomas, Reams, Sheldon, Cairnes, McMorris, Veloria and Schoesler.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Agriculture & Ecology: 2/13/97, 2/20/97 [DP].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & ECOLOGY

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Chandler, Chairman; Parlette, Vice Chairman; Linville, Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Cooper; Delvin; Koster; Mastin and Sump.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 1 member: Representative Regala.

Staff: Bill Lynch (786-7092).

Background: The public works trust fund provides low-interest and interest-free loans to local governments to help finance public works projects. The Legislature must appropriate the funds for a specific list of projects recommended for funding by the Public Works Board before any of the money may be obligated.

The water quality account provides grants and loans to local governments, state agencies, and Indian tribes for water pollution control facilities. The monies in this account must be appropriated by the Legislature.

In order to be eligible to receive money from the public works trust fund or the water quality account, a city, town, or county that plans under the Growth Management Act (GMA) must have adopted a comprehensive plan and development regulations that are consistent with GMA requirements.

Summary of Bill: A city, town, or county planning under the GMA is not required to adopt a comprehensive plan and development regulations that are consistent with the requirements of GMA in order to be eligible for grants or loans from the public works trust fund or the water quality account.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: Current law impacts the health of our citizens and is also worse for the environment because it does not allow needed funding for projects necessary to prevent pollution. Outflow from failing septic systems is flowing into the harbor in Whatcom County because money that had been previously approved for the project has been denied. This is an unnecessary sanction because the communities were already trying to comply with growth management requirements. Water quality needs to be protected in the short term, particularly for people who grow oysters. People with failing septic systems often do not have the resources to fix them. The Governor has other sanctions that do not affect public health that can be applied to encourage compliance with growth management.

Testimony Against: Jurisdictions that have complied with growth management requirements should not have their projects denied in favor of jurisdictions that have not complied with the requirements. There is not enough money in these programs to fund all requests. Growth management requires looking at the whole picture. This bill could fund a project that will be impacted as a consequence of failing to take action under growth management. This bill could be narrowed to provide an exemption for public health emergencies.

Testified: Pete Kremen, Whatcom County Executive (pro); John Adams, San Juan County Board of Health (pro); Paul Parker, Washington Association of Counties (pro); John Manning, San Juan County Health Community Services (pro); Tim Smith, Pacific Coast Oyster Growers (pro); Steve Wells, DCTED (con); and Scott Merriman, Washington Environmental Council (con).