

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HCR 4434

As Reported By House Committee On:

Agriculture & Ecology

Brief Description: Creating a joint select committee on water quality.

Sponsors: Representatives Chandler and Linville.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Agriculture & Ecology: 2/26/98 [DP].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & ECOLOGY

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Chandler, Chairman; Parlette, Vice Chairman; Schoesler, Vice Chairman; Linville, Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Cooper; Delvin; Koster; Mastin; Regala and Sump.

Staff: Kenneth Hirst (786-7105).

Background: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has agreed to a settlement of a citizen suit filed under the federal Clean Water Act regarding violations of water quality standards in bodies of water in this state. The settlement provides for the implementation of the provisions of the federal act regarding those violations, including the provisions under which the pollution carrying capacity of the bodies of water and stream segments would be established. The latter are known as total maximum daily loads under the federal act. The settlement is to be implemented over a 15-year period.

The Department of Ecology has entered into an agreement with the EPA under which the state agency may be the lead agency for implementing the settlement.

Summary of Bill: A Joint Select Committee on Water Quality is to be appointed. The committee is to examine the Department of Ecology's program for implementing the water quality settlement including the decisions that affect how water quality problems are defined, the causes of those problems, and the means by which solutions to these problems are to be developed and implemented. The committee is also to engage communities, industries, interest groups, and citizens in this

examination. The committee is to report its recommendations to the Legislature at the regular session held in 1999.

The committee is to be composed of three members of the House of Representatives selected by the Speaker, two from the majority party caucus in the House and one from the minority party caucus in the House, and three members of the Senate appointed by the President of the Senate, two from the majority party caucus in the Senate and one from the minority party caucus in the Senate. The members of the committee are to select cochairs, one from the House and one from the Senate. The Office of Program Research and Senate Committee Services are to provide staff support for the committee.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Testimony For: None.

Testimony Against: A deadline should be established for concluding the discussion and getting on with the work. Funding should be provided for doing the work.

Testified: Megan White, Department of Ecology (commented on bill).