

# ANALYSIS OF SB 5029

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*House Agriculture & Ecology Committee*

*March 20, 1997*

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## **BACKGROUND:**

*Water Related Studies. In 1988, a Joint Select Committee on Water Resource Policy was established. An independent fact-finding service— was employed to document the opinions of interested parties, facilitate discussions on the fundamentals of water resource policy, and identify needed changes or clarifications for state water allocation law. The service reported its recommendations to the Joint Select Committee. While the service was collecting this information and the Legislature was considering its recommendations, the Department of Ecology was prohibited from setting instream flows or reservations of water for future use and, with the exception certain emergency water permits, was prohibited from issuing any but temporary water use permits. (Chapter 47, Laws of 1988.) This restriction expired June 30, 1989. (Section 2(7), Chapter 47, Laws of 1988.) The Joint Select Committee was originally scheduled to be terminated on June 30, 1991, but its termination was extended until June 30, 1993. (Section 3(7), Chapter 47, Laws 1988 and Section 1(6), Chapter 273, Laws of 1991.)*

*In 1990, the Department of Ecology was directed to establish a Water Resources Data Management Task Force. The Task Force was to provide recommendations to the Department and a report to the Legislature on the collection and processing of water resource data and on such data needs and to recommend a information management plan. (RCW 90.54.030 and Section 2, Chapter 295, Laws of 1990.)*

*Water Projects and Rates. In 1983, DOE was authorized to acquire, design, and build an East Selah Re-regulating Reservoir to improve efficiencies in managing water releases and demands for water in the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's Yakima Project. (RCW 43.21A.460.) The current capital budget dedicates \$2.5 million of Referendum 38 monies for the state's share in a water conservation demonstration project, Yakima River re-regulation reservoir. (Section 302, Chapter 16, Laws of 1995 Second Special Session.) However, the site now being considered for such a reservoir is near the City of Parker, not Selah.*

*In 1989, the Department was directed to develop a demonstration irrigation conservation plan for a voluntary demonstration project. (RCW 90.54.190.) In 1993, it was directed to examine irrigation rate structures and develop model conservation rate structures for irrigation districts. The DOE was to report to the Legislature regarding the latter by December 31, 1993. (RCW 90.54.200.)*

**SUMMARY:**

*Provisions of law are repealed that required the DOE to create a Water Resources Data Management Task Force, required the Task Force to provide recommendations on the collection and processing of water resource data, and an information management plan, and required the DOE to develop a 5-year plan for data collection and information management. Also repealed are provisions authorizing the Task Force to provide continuing guidance to the legislature the DOE in developing and maintaining an effective information management plan and requiring the DOE to coordinate the water resource data program to provide water resource information that meets the needs of its comprehensive water resources program. (Section 1.)*

*A statute is repealed that authorizes DOE to acquire, design, and build an East Selah Re-regulating Reservoir to improve efficiencies in managing water releases and demands for water in the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's Yakima Project. (Section 6(1).) Sections of law are also repealed that direct the DOE to develop a demonstration irrigation conservation plan for a voluntary demonstration project, to examine irrigation rate structures, and to develop model conservation rate structures for irrigation districts. (Section 6(2)&(3).)*

*References to a moratorium which expired in 1989 that prohibited the DOE from setting instream flow requirements, from reserving water for future use, and from issuing permanent water rights are repealed. A reference to a Joint Select Committee on Water Resource Policy that expired in 1993 is also repealed. (Section 1, 2, 3, and 4.) Also removed is a reference to a reporting requirement that was itself repealed in 1987. (Section 5.)*