

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 5029

As Passed House

April 8, 1997

Title: An act relating to obsolete provisions in the water code.

Brief Description: Eliminating obsolete references in the water code.

Sponsors: Senator Morton.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Agriculture & Ecology: 3/20/97, 3/27/97 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 4/8/97, 92-0.

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: Water Related Studies. In 1988, the Joint Select Committee on Water Resource Policy was established. During a portion of its studies, the Department of Ecology (DOE) 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 of certain water use permits. This restriction expired June 30, 1989. The joint select committee was originally scheduled to be terminated on June 30, 1991, but its termination was extended until June 30, 1993.

In 1990, the DOE was directed to establish a Water Resources Data Management Task Force. The task force was to provide recommendations to the DOE and a report to the Legislature on the collection and processing of water resource data and on such data needs, and to recommend an information management plan.

Water Projects and Rates. In 1983, the 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. The current capital budget dedicates Referendum 38 monies for the state's share in a water conservation demonstration project, Yakima River re-regulation reservoir. However, the site now being considered for such a reservoir is near the City of Parker, not Selah.

In 1989, the DOE was directed to develop a demonstration irrigation conservation plan for a voluntary demonstration project. 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.

Summary of Bill: Repealed are references to a moratorium which expired in 1989 that prohibited the DOE from setting instream flow requirements, from reserving water for future use, and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. A reference to the Joint Select Committee on Water Resource Policy that expired in 1993 is also repealed. Also removed is a reference to a reporting requirement that was itself repealed in 1987.

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 five-year plan for data collection and information management. Also repealed are provisions authorizing the task force to provide continuing guidance to the Legislature and 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.

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. 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.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: The bill removes obsolete laws from the books.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Senator Morton, prime sponsor (in favor).