

FINAL BILL REPORT

SSB 5079

FULL VETO

As Passed Legislature

Brief Description: Providing an alternative means to comply with wastewater discharge permit requirements.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Agriculture & Environment (originally sponsored by Senator Swecker).

Senate Committee on Agriculture & Environment

House Committee on Agriculture & Ecology

Background: Any person who owns or operates a facility discharging wastewater to waters of the state must apply for a wastewater discharge permit from the Department of Ecology. Permits are drafted by Department of Ecology staff, with conditions that place limits on the quantity and concentration of contaminants that may be discharged. Public notice and an opportunity to comment is provided for each draft permit, and a hearing may be required if there is sufficient public interest. After the close of the comment period, the Department of Ecology will respond to comments and issue a final permit.

It has been suggested that allowing an applicant to develop the draft permit would encourage pollution prevention and decrease Department of Ecology program costs.

Summary: Findings are made regarding the benefits of allowing the private preparation of draft wastewater discharge permits.

The Department of Ecology must determine whether each application for a new or modified wastewater permit will be processed in 180 days. If the permit will not be processed within 180 days, the department must notify the applicant, and the applicant may choose to withdraw the application and resubmit the application in the form of a draft permit and fact sheet.

The Department of Ecology is required to approve or deny the proposed permit within 45 days if no hearing is required, or within 90 days if a hearing is required. The department retains full authority to approve, modify, or deny any draft permit.

The Department of Ecology is directed to make available guidelines specifying the elements of a complete draft permit.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	47	0
House	62	36 (House amended)
Senate	38	4 (Senate concurred)