

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5584

As of February 2, 1998

Title: An act relating to water permit processing.

Brief Description: Changing procedures for investigating water permit applications.

Sponsors: Senator Fraser.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Agriculture & Environment: 2/18/97.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT

Staff: Bob Lee (786-7404)

Background: The process for acquiring a right to the beneficial use of water is initiated by the submission to the Department of Ecology of an application for a permit to appropriate. When an application is filed which complies with the statutory requirements, the department is charged with the duty of determining what water, if any, is available and what beneficial uses it can be applied to. Public notice must be published by an applicant as directed by the department at the time a proper application is filed.

The department is required to make and include in the record written findings of fact on all matters it investigates.

In 1993, a Legislative Water Right Fee Task Force recommended a number of statutory changes to improve efficiency in the water right permit process. One of the issues addressed by the task force was the failure of the current application form to provide sufficient information in all cases to support findings of fact and a final determination by the Department of Ecology.

Summary of Bill: Water right permit applicants are required to provide such information as the Department of Ecology may require, in addition to a completed application form, and satisfy the protocols set by the department for obtaining and providing that information. If the required information has been provided and the protocols satisfied, the department is required to review it and may verify its accuracy.

The department is required to make available to the public, at least 60 days before issuing a water rights permit, a summary of the "record of examination" and the proposed permit, and to consider any comments received and the entire record.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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