

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## ESB 5590

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C 398 L 97

Synopsis as Enacted

**Brief Description:** Funding a biosolids management program.

**Sponsors:** Senators Newhouse, Fraser, Swecker, Morton, McAuliffe and Rasmussen.

**Senate Committee on Agriculture & Environment**

**Senate Committee on Ways & Means**

**House Committee on Agriculture & Ecology**

**House Committee on Appropriations**

**Background:** In 1992, the Legislature directed the Department of Ecology to develop a biosolids management program. "Biosolids" is defined as municipal sewage sludge that results from the wastewater treatment process and can be beneficially recycled. Most biosolids in the state are applied to forest or agricultural lands; a small proportion is incinerated. A biosolids fee surcharge of 5 percent is added to the wastewater discharge permit fee for all municipalities who do not incinerate their wastes.

Currently, biosolids are managed by local health departments as a solid waste. In response to the 1992 legislation, the Department of Ecology has developed a biosolids program with a new system of permitting. Under the new program, the Department of Ecology takes the lead, and local health departments have the option of seeking delegation from the state. The new program is consistent with changes that have been implemented by the Environmental Protection Agency at the federal level.

It has been suggested that the existing funding provided by the 5 percent surcharge on wastewater discharge permit fees will not be adequate to fund the new biosolids program.

**Summary:** The Department of Ecology is directed to establish annual fees for administering the biosolids permitting program. Fees are determined by the number of residences served by the permittee's biosolids management program. The fees must be established by rule.

All fees must be deposited in the biosolids permit account in the state treasury, and may be spent after appropriation to administer biosolids permits. The Department of Ecology must report to the Legislature on the use of moneys from the biosolids permit account on or before December 31 of odd-numbered years.

The Department of Ecology is directed to study the feasibility of modifying the fee schedule in areas where program authority has been delegated to local health departments.

**Votes on Final Passage:**

Senate	48	0	
House	96	0	(House amended)
Senate	45	0	(Senate concurred)

**Effective:** July 27, 1997