

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SCR 8408

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Agriculture & Environment, March 5, 1997

**Brief Description:** Creating a water resource policy report to analyze and explain water resource statutes and rules.

**Sponsors:** Senators Morton, Snyder, McDonald, Loveland, Haugen, Sellar, Prince, Rasmussen, Hochstatter, Bauer, Winsley, Newhouse, Hargrove, Hale, Anderson, Schow, Spanel, McCaslin, Stevens, Strannigan, Fraser, Franklin and Roach.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Agriculture & Environment: 3/4/97, 3/5/97 [DPS, DNP].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 8408 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Morton, Chair; Swecker, Vice Chair; Oke and Rasmussen.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Fraser and McAuliffe.

**Staff:** Vic Moon (786-7469)

**Background:** Over the last six years, the Legislature has been looking at revising numerous statutes relating to water policy in the state of Washington. No major reform of water policy has taken place.

**Summary of Substitute Bill:** Given the fact that water statutes are written in a broad manner, and the broadness of the statute which causes problems for the Department of Ecology and water users throughout the state, the Legislature directs that a study be made of water policy laws. The study must be done by two independent persons employed by April 1 by the Legislature on recommendation from a list of five persons submitted by the chairs of the House and Senate committees dealing with agriculture, environment and ecology. There is a schedule for the two consultants, who must develop a report:

- By June 1, the experts complete a draft of the water resource law report.
- By June 15, the Department of Ecology responds to the report.
- By August 1, the experts report to the full standing committees.
- By September 1, the experts submit their final report to the committee.
- By October 1, the standing committees distribute the report and hold public hearings.

- By October 15, the committees take final action on the report.
- By December 15, the standing committees adopt statutory amendments clarifying law.

A sum of no more than \$48,900 of general fund moneys may be used to fund the study. If funding is not provided in the budget, the report is not required under the concurrent resolution. Current 1995-97 funds may be used as well as funds appropriated for the 1997-99 biennium.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:** The substitute clarifies that the hiring will be done by the appropriate House and Senate employment committees and allows current legislative funds to be used.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Testimony For:** An independent analysis of complex water law is needed for a base from which to work on 1998 water law proposals. The WAC rules are a big problem.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** Scott Barr (pro); Karla Fullerton, Cattlemen's Association (pro).