

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1468

As Reported By House Committee On:
Agriculture & Ecology

Title: An act relating to water.

Brief Description: Requiring the department of ecology to provide information regarding the adequacy of water supplies to meet the demands of projected growth.

Sponsors: Representatives Anderson, Barlean, Linville, Wensman, Lantz, Regala, Stensen, Romero, Reardon, Morris, Dance, Ruderman, Haigh, Constantine, Lovick, Voloria, Esser and Kenney.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Agriculture & Ecology: 2/22/99, 3/2/99 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires the county-wide planning policy adopted by a county to address policies that consider the present and future availability of adequate water supplies.
- Requires the OFM to revise a 20-year population projection if the projection does not reflect information regarding adequate domestic water supply provided in a county's county-wide planning policy.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & ECOLOGY

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 14 members: Representatives G. Chandler, Republican Co-Chair; Linville, Democratic Co-Chair; Cooper, Democratic Vice Chair; Koster, Republican Vice Chair; Anderson; B. Chandler; Delvin; Fortunato; Grant; Reardon; Schoesler; Stensen; Sump and Wood.

Staff: Kenneth Hirst (786-7105).

Background:

Each year, the Office of Financial Management (OFM) determines the population of each county. Once approximately every five years, the OFM also prepares 20-year population projections for counties that adopt plans under the Growth Management Act (GMA). These projections are submitted to the counties and cities within them for review. OFM must consider and comment on the information provided by these local governments before adopting its projections. A city or county may request that a projection for the city or county be revised.

The GMA requires a county planning under the act and each city in the county to include areas and densities that are sufficient to permit the projected urban 20-year growth based on these projections.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The county-wide planning policy adopted by a county under the GMA must address policies that consider the present and future availability of adequate water supplies and provide, where applicable, a collaborative process with special purpose districts that supply domestic water.

The OFM must revise its 20-year population projection if it does not reflect information regarding adequate domestic water supply provided in the county-wide planning policy adopted by a county under the GMA.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill requires the OFM to revise its population projection if it does not reflect information in a county's planning policy rather than requiring, as in the original bill, the projections to be accompanied by a statement by the Department of Ecology that adequate water supplies are or will be available to serve the population.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: (Substitute bill) Requested on March 2, 1999.

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

Testimony For: (Original Bill): (1) When the OFM makes a 20-year population projection, counties must provide the infrastructure to accommodate the projected population. A county should not have to accommodate the projection unless the DOE says water is available to support it. This problem will become acute when projections are made in 2001. (2) Some areas are already under hook-up limitations

or face saltwater intrusion problems. They should not have to provide infrastructure for growth they cannot accommodate. (3) Consideration of water supply in growth planning comes too late in the process. It should be considered up-front. (4) The DOE should be the entity in charge of making water availability decisions.

Testimony Against: (Original Bill): (1) There is no test or technique that proves that water is available. The bill should study means of assessing availability. (2) Until "paper" rights and inchoate rights are settled, it will be hard to project water availability, especially for 20 years in the future. (3) The bill does not solve a problem, it simply gives more weight to those who oppose growth. Watershed planning and other tools should be used to make water available. (4) Local people, not the state, should be in charge of making the water availability decisions. (5) The OFM made its first projections without much experience.

Testified: (In favor-Original Bill): Representative Anderson, prime sponsor; Judy Turpin, Washington Environmental Council; Steve Lindstrom, Sno-King Water District Coalition; Steve Wehly, Muckleshoot Tribe; Dave Williams, Association of Washington Cities; and Joe Daniels, Washington Association of Sewer and Water Districts.

(With concerns-Original Bill): Mike Ryherd, 1000 Friends of Washington; Kathleen Collins, Washington Water Policy Alliance; and Phil Watkins, City of Bainbridge Island.

(Opposed-Original Bill): Scott Hazelgrove, Association of Washington Business; and Bill Clark, Washington Association of Realtors.