

FINAL BILL REPORT

SHB 1826

C 237 L 99

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Requiring appointment of water masters in watershed management areas with WRIA plans.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Agriculture & Ecology (Originally sponsored by Representatives Grant, Linville, Mastin and G. Chandler).

House Committee on Agriculture & Ecology
Senate Committee on Environmental Quality & Water Resources

Background:

The water code allows the Department of Ecology (DOE) to appoint a water master for any area of the state and for such duration as the DOE finds appropriate. The water master is supervised and employed by the DOE. The water master regulates and controls the use of water within the area by regulating headgates, conduits, and reservoirs to prevent the use of water in excess of the amount to which the owner of the water right is entitled. A water master must also enforce such rules as the DOE from time to time prescribes. Water masters must be deputized by the counties or counties in their areas, and they have the power to arrest violators.

Legislation enacted in 1998 authorizes the development of watershed management plans by local planning units. Such a plan may not contain elements that create obligations for tribal, county, or state government unless each government to be obligated has at least one member on the planning unit and the members representing these governments agree to the obligations. Among the obligations expressly governed by this policy are actions imposing a fiscal impact or requiring a redeployment of resources.

Summary:

The DOE may appoint a water master to each watershed management area for which a plan has been adopted by a planning unit and counties under watershed planning legislation enacted in 1998 if the plan requests or requires the appointment and funding is available.

Votes on Final Passage:

House 93 4

Senate 41 0 (Senate amended)
House 94 0 (House concurred)

Effective: July 25, 1999