

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2736

As Reported By House Committee On:
Agriculture & Ecology

Title: An act relating to water storage.

Brief Description: Creating the task force on water storage.

Sponsors: Representatives G. Chandler, Linville, B. Chandler, Cooper, Clements, Parlette, Lisk, Koster, Anderson, Ruderman, Sump and Schoesler.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Agriculture & Ecology: 1/28/00, 2/1/00 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Creates a Task Force on Water Storage to examine the role of increased water storage in providing water supplies and flood control and to examine means of providing funding for the storage.
- Requires the task force to report to the Legislature by December 31, 2000.
- Appropriates \$150,000 to the Department of Ecology for the purposes of the study.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & ECOLOGY

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 13 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 and Wood.

Staff: Kenneth Hirst (786-7105).

Background:

The Water Resources Act lists fundamental principles that are to guide the utilization and management of the waters of the state. One of these gives high priority to the development of multipurpose water storage facilities for programs of water allocation, planning, management, and efficiency. The act directs the Department of Ecology (DOE) and others to evaluate the potential for the development of new storage projects for a variety of purposes.

Legislation enacted in 1997 directs the DOE to provide, upon request, assistance to an applicant for a water right in obtaining or developing an adequate and appropriate supply of water in certain instances.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

A Task Force on Water Storage is created to examine the role of increased water storage in providing water supplies and flood control and to examine means of providing funding for the storage. It is composed of: a representative of each of the Department of Agriculture; Department of Community; Department of Trade; Department of Economic Development; Department of Ecology; Department of Fish and Wildlife; Department of Health; a representative of the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office; a representative of conservation districts; two representatives of irrigation districts; two representatives of cities; two representatives of counties; two representatives of tribes; a representative of a municipal water purveyor that is not a division or other part of city government; four members of the House of Representatives, two from each of the major caucuses; and four members of the Senate, two from each of the major caucuses.

One of the irrigation district members must represent a district within a federal reclamation project and one, a district that is outside of such a project. One of the city members and one of the county members must represent jurisdictions in western Washington and one of the city members and one of the county members must represent jurisdictions in eastern Washington. One of the city members and one of the county members must represent jurisdictions with relatively large populations and one of the city members and one of the county members must represent jurisdictions with relatively small populations. One of the tribal representatives must represent a reservation in western Washington and one, a reservation in eastern Washington. One of the tribal representatives must represent a relatively large reservation and one, a relatively small reservation.

Staff support for the task force is provided by the DOE and the director must convene the first meeting of the task force. The first meeting is to be held not less than 30 days after the effective date of the bill.

No member of the task force may receive compensation, per diem, or reimbursement of expenses from the task force or the DOE for his or her activities as a member of the task force, but may receive such payments as are authorized by the entity he or she is employed by, is appointed from, or represents. The task force is to report its recommendations to the appropriate committees of the Legislature by December 31, 2000.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: Added by the substitute bill are the tribal members of the task force and an express statement that the surface water storage to be examined includes off-stream storage. The substitute bill appropriates monies for the next fiscal year; the original bill appropriates monies for the current biennium.

Appropriation: The sum of \$150,000 is appropriated from the general fund to the DOE for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2001, for the purposes of this study.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 21, 2000.

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

Testimony For: 1) Water conservation and transfers are not enough to meet the demands for water; storage for new supplies of water is needed. 2) In the past, \$125 million was appropriated by referendum for water supply facilities. A new effort in this direction is needed again; the task force is a starting point. 3) New water storage is needed as an option to address a number of problems. It could help provide the water flows and temperatures needed for fish.

Testimony Against: 1) More balanced representation on the task force and a more balanced study is needed to look at problems of flows for fish and on-stream storage. 2) Representation of water purveyors that are not divisions of city government should not be limited to just one member or to those that serve populous areas.

Testified: (In support) (Original bill): Mike Schwisow, Washington Water Resources Association; Dick Ducharme, Building Industry Association of Washington and Yakima Growers and Shippers Association; Ken Slattery, Department of Ecology; and Kristin Harte-Sawin, Washington PUD Association.

(Comments) (Original bill): Tony Minhard, Association of Water and Sewer Districts.

(Opposed) (Original bill): Judy Turpin, Washington Environmental Council.