

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2818

As Reported By House Committee On:
Agriculture & Ecology

Title: An act relating to the Roza irrigation district off-stream storage reservoir.

Brief Description: Requiring a preconstruction analysis of the Roza irrigation district off-stream storage project.

Sponsors: Representatives B. Chandler, G. Chandler, Skinner and Sump.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Agriculture & Ecology: 2/3/00, 2/4/00 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires that a preconstruction analysis be conducted of a proposed off-stream storage project at Washout Canyon.
- Appropriates \$300,000 for the analysis.

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:

The Roza Irrigation District has proposed an off-stream water storage project in Washout Canyon, northeast of the city of Sunnyside and adjacent to SR-241. The hydraulic height of the proposed dam would be 270 feet; the normal water surface

would be at about 1600 feet above sea level and would cover approximately 540 acres. Under the district's proposal, up to 300 cubic feet per second (cfs) would be pumped into the reservoir during the spring run-off, before the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation places the Yakima Project on storage control each year. The district would release water from the reservoir in proration years. In these years, the bureau prorates the shortfall in water supply among entities which, like the Roza Irrigation District, have more junior water rights.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The Department of Ecology (DOE) must conduct a preconstruction analysis of a proposed off-stream storage project of the Roza Irrigation District at Washout Canyon. The analysis is to be of: (1) the suitability of the site for the construction of a retainment dam and water storage reservoir; and (2) the project's potential to create a warm water fishery, provide recreational opportunities, and enhance agriculture, anadromous fish and instream flows.

The analysis must be conducted through contracts with the district and must include analysis of water rights related to the operation of the dam, the geology and hydrology of the site, appropriate dam design and dynamics, and its impact on water-related issues. The analysis must be completed by June 30, 2001.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The substitute bill adds the requirements the project's potential to enhance anadromous fish and instream flows and the water rights related to the operation of the dam be part of the analysis. The substitute bill also broadens the consultation required and adds the requirement that the appropriation be matched by the district.

Appropriation: The sum of \$300,000 is appropriated to the DOE from the general fund for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2001, for this purpose which must be matched by the Roza Irrigation District with cash and/or in-kind services.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: (Original bill) The Roza Irrigation District is large but has junior water rights. In water short years, its water supply is reduced. In 1994, it received a little more than one-third of the amount it normally receives. The purpose of the proposed project is to provide real water during those water short years. By delivering water to irrigators, the project will also increase return flows.

(With recommended changes) (Original bill) 1) The project should also be analyzed to determine its potential to enhance instream flows and fish recovery, which are objectives of the federal Yakima River Basin Water Enhancement Project. The water rights of the project should also be examined. 2) A matching requirement should be added for the appropriation.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: (In support) (Original bill) Mike Schwisow, Washington Water Resources Association.

(With recommended changes) (Original bill) Carl Samuelson, Department of Fish and Wildlife; Ken Slattery, Department of Ecology; and Dawn Vyvyan, Yakama Nation.