

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5885

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Environmental Quality & Water Resources, March 2, 1999

**Title:** An act relating to domestic waste treatment plants and plant operators.

**Brief Description:** Establishing a certification program for operators of wastewater treatment plants.

**Sponsors:** Senator Fraser.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Environmental Quality & Water Resources: 2/25/99, 3/2/99 [DPS-WM].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY & WATER RESOURCES

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5885 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Fraser, Chair; Eide, Vice Chair; Honeyford, Jacobsen, McAuliffe, Morton and Swecker.

**Staff:** Richard Ramsey (786-7412)

**Background:** The Department of Ecology (DOE) certifies wastewater treatment plant operators. Existing fees for certification are a \$50 application fee and a \$30 annual renewal fee. Fees have not generated sufficient income to administer the program, including maintaining and revising certification exams to reflect evolving wastewater treatment technology. The Association of Boards of Certification recommends DOE maintain a staffing ratio of 1 staff person for every 1,000 certified operators. DOE maintains 1.2 FTE coordinator and clerical support for the 1,900 certified operators.

**Summary of Substitute Bill:** The Department of Ecology must establish by rule two fee schedules, one for wastewater treatment plant operators and a second for wastewater treatment plants. The fee schedules must cover the costs to administer the program. A wastewater operator certification account is created in the general fund. The effective date is January 1, 2000.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:** The substitute removes provisions setting fees for wastewater treatment plants while retaining that these fees be developed and adopted by rule, adds an effective date and makes technical corrections.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on February 21, 1999.

**Effective Date:** January 1, 2000.

**Testimony For:** The certification program's rules have been effective in helping protect the environment. The Department of Ecology needs to upgrade the operator examinations.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** Melodie Selby, Department of Ecology (pro); Chris Sheridan, wastewater operator (pro); John Bykonen, wastewater operator (pro); Phil Baga, SW Sub. Sewer District (pro).