

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6261

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Environmental Quality & Water Resources, January 21, 2000

**Title:** An act relating to chlorine in drinking water.

**Brief Description:** Limiting chlorine in drinking water.

**Sponsors:** Senators Rasmussen and Fraser.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Environmental Quality & Water Resources: 1/18/2000; 1/21/2000 [DPS].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY & WATER RESOURCES

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6261 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

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

**Staff:** Genevieve Pisarski (786-7488)

**Background:** Under existing law, the Department of Health regulates the use of chlorine in small, privately-owned drinking water systems. The department is authorized to prescribe the method, amount, and frequency of chlorination in system operating plans and to enforce adherence to the plans. The ability of small, privately-owned systems to accomplish needed disinfection is largely limited to chlorination. Depending on the type and location of contamination, disinfection may result in levels of chlorine that produce discomfort and negative reactions in the average person and require use of alternative sources of drinking water for periods of time. There is concern that chlorination procedures be more precisely prescribed, to assure that the amount and duration of elevated levels of chlorine is limited to only what is necessary.

**Summary of Substitute Bill:** By January 1, 2001, the Department of Health must recommend better operating procedures to prevent excessive chlorination and reliance on chlorination in place of system improvements.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:** A statement of legislative intent is added. The requirement that the Department of Health must develop and report to the Legislature recommendations for regulations to limit the amount and duration of chlorination to what is necessary to achieve the level of disinfection required by law is removed.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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

**Testimony For:** There are many complaints from customers of small water companies. Some companies are not responding to the Department of Health orders to report chlorine levels. Apparent excessive levels of chlorine are causing customers to need water filters. Water is sometimes unusable for plants, pets, and household uses.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** Richard Winchell (pro); Doug Levy, City of Everett (neutral).