

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1845

As Reported by House Committee On:
Appropriations

Title: An act relating to surface mining reclamation permit fees.

Brief Description: Increasing the fee for a surface mining reclamation permit.

Sponsors: Representatives Sehlin and H. Sommers ; by request of Department of Natural Resources.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Appropriations: 2/21/01, 3/7/01 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Increases the surface mining permit fee from \$650 to \$1,200 and makes the fee non-refundable.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 27 members: Representatives Sehlin, Republican Co-Chair; H. Sommers, Democratic Co-Chair; Barlean, Republican Vice Chair; Doumit, Democratic Vice Chair; Alexander, Buck, Clements, Cody, Dunshee, Fromhold, Gombosky, Grant, Kagi, Keiser, Kenney, Kessler, Lambert, Linville, Mastin, McIntire, Pearson, Pflug, Ruderman, D. Schmidt, Schual-Berke, Talcott and Tokuda.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 4 members: Representatives Lisk, Republican Vice Chair; Boldt, Cox and Mulliken.

Staff: Jeff Olsen (786-7157).

Background:

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) regulates and monitors surface mines. The Surface Mine Reclamation Program is primarily funded by a \$650 application fee paid to the department by persons applying for a surface mining permit. Permit fee revenues are deposited into the Surface Mining Reclamation Account to support the program.

Summary of Bill:

The reclamation permit fee is increased from \$650 to \$1,200. In addition, the fee for a surface mining permit is non-refundable.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: The DNR's Surface Mining Permit Program is experiencing many challenging environmental requirements. Review of environmental impact statements and compliance with the federal Endangered Species Act takes time. There is a need for technical assistance to return lands to productive use. In addition, without a fee increase the program will experience a 30 percent reduction in staff. The aggregate industry agrees with the department and supports the fee increase. As consumption increases, industry needs a strong management program at the DNR for mine reclamation and enforcement.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Ron Teissere, Department of Natural Resources; Bruce Chattin, Washington Aggregate and Concrete Association; Steve Gano, Glacier Northwest; Scott Hazlegrove, Cadman; and Willy O'Neil, Associated General Contractors.