

Agriculture & Ecology Committee

HB 1905

Brief Description: *Clarifying the use of natural systems as integral portions of storm water control systems and aquifer protection systems.*

Sponsors: *Representatives Linville and G. Chandler .*

Brief Summary of Bill

- *Specifies storm water sewerage facilities include natural systems, such as wetlands, that collect or filter storm or surface water.*
- *Includes natural systems in definitions and authority statutes related to storm water sewerage facilities and in funding statutes for water pollution control and storm water facilities and activities.*

Hearing Date: *2/20/01*

Staff: *Caroleen Dineen (786-7156).*

Background:

Storm water sewerage facilities may be operated by counties, cities, towns, metropolitan municipal corporations, public utility districts, and water-sewer districts. Generally, the authority to operate these systems includes the power to construct, acquire, maintain and operate sites and facilities for storm water drainage and to establish rates and charges for the service and facilities.

Washington law authorizes various methods for promoting the prevention of water pollution. Counties may create aquifer protection areas to finance the protection, preservation, and rehabilitation of subterranean water. Counties also may create shellfish protection districts to address water quality issues affecting shellfish farming or harvesting and may appoint a local advisory council to make recommendations on implementation of shellfish protection programs. Further, several state programs, such as water pollution control grants and the public works board funding programs, provide funding for water

pollution control facilities and storm sewerage systems.

Summary of Bill:

Storm water sewerage systems or facilities include natural systems, such as wetlands areas, that collect or filter storm or surface water. Various statutes authorizing operation of storm water systems and acquisition of property for storm water management by counties, cities, towns, metropolitan municipal corporations, public utility districts, and water-sewer districts are amended to specify the inclusion of natural systems. Definitions are also amended in various statutes to reflect this change.

Various statutes related to water pollution prevention are amended to include natural systems in funding authority for specified projects. These include the county aquifer protection area, public works board's public works projects, water pollution control facilities grants, and real estate excise tax capital projects funding statutes.

The use of natural areas, such as wetlands, to filter contaminants from storm water runoff is included as an element of a shellfish protection program implemented by a county shellfish protection district.

Appropriation: *None.*

Fiscal Note: *Not Requested.*

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