

FINAL BILL REPORT

HB 2258

C 26 L 01 E 2

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Funding drought and earthquake emergency relief.

Sponsors: By Representatives H. Sommers and Sehlin.

House Committee on Appropriations

Background:

In response to the Nisqually earthquake of February 28, 2001, Governor Locke instructed the Department of Military's Emergency Management Division to coordinate all earthquake related assistance to affected areas. President Bush declared Washington a major disaster area, triggering the release of federal funds to supplement recovery efforts in the state.

On March 14, 2001, Governor Locke declared a statewide drought emergency. Declaration of a drought requires that the water supply is below 75 percent of normal and the water shortage is likely to create undue hardships for various water uses and users.

To alleviate hardships and reduce burdens on various water uses and users, the Department of Ecology is given emergency power in response to drought conditions. The department may take the following emergency actions: 1) issue emergency permits for water; 2) approve temporary transfer of water rights; 3) provide funding assistance to public agencies to alleviate drought conditions; and 4) take other actions depending on future developments.

The emergency reserve fund consists of general fund revenues in excess of the state expenditure limit. This fund is in the state treasury and is subject to appropriation. The Legislature may appropriate moneys from this fund only with approval of at least two-thirds of the members of each house of the Legislature, and only if the appropriation does not cause total expenditures to exceed the limit.

Summary:

\$20 million is appropriated from the emergency reserve fund for deposit into the Nisqually earthquake account for costs associated with the Nisqually earthquake.

\$5 million is appropriated from the emergency reserve fund for deposit into the state drought preparedness account for costs associated with the statewide drought emergency.

Votes on Final Passage:

First Special Session

House 96 0

Second Special Session

House 84 0

Senate 39 0

Effective: July 13, 2001