
State Government Committee

HB 2561

Brief Description: Concerning the inspection and copying of water conservancy board records.

Sponsors: Representatives Schoesler and McMorris.

Brief Summary of Bill
<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Specifies that requests for public inspection of water conservancy board records must be filed with the Department of Ecology.

Hearing Date: 1/31/02

Staff: Bree Ramage (786-7617).

Background:

Historically, applications for modifying existing water rights were filed with and processed by the Department of Ecology (DOE). An alternative processing system was established with the enactment of legislation in 1997 authorizing water conservancy boards. Therefore, a person proposing a transfer of a water right may elect to file an application with a water conservancy board if a board has been established for the geographical area where the water is or would be diverted, withdrawn, or used.

Under the Public Records Act, each board must establish and maintain records of its proceedings and determinations. While records are in the possession of a water conservancy board, the records must be made available for public inspection and copying.

When a water conservancy board has finished its business involving a water right transfer application, the board must send the original copies of all records relating to that application to the DOE for record keeping. Once the records are transferred, the responsibility for making the records available to the public is transferred to the DOE.

Summary of Bill:

A request for public inspection and copying of a water conservancy board's records must be filed with the DOE and must specify which records are requested. The DOE must identify

and provide to the requester a copy of each of the records held by the department and then forward the request for any remaining records to the conservancy board. The request date for records held by the conservancy board is the date the board receives the request.

Rulemaking Authority: No express authority.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

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