

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1865

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Environment, Energy & Water, March 30, 2001

Title: An act relating to irrigation districts acting as initiating governments for watershed planning.

Brief Description: Changing watershed planning provisions.

Sponsors: By Representatives G. Chandler and Grant.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Environment, Energy & Water: 3/23/01, 3/30/01 [DPA].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY & WATER

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Fraser, Chair; Regala, Vice Chair; Hale, Jacobsen and Morton.

Staff: Genevieve Pisarski (786-7488)

Background: Under current law, watershed planning for a water resource inventory area (WRIA), one of the 62 river basins or sub-basins into which the state is divided, can be initiated only with the concurrence of three local entities: all counties with jurisdiction in the WRIA; the largest city or town within the WRIA, if any; and the water supply utility obtaining the largest quantity of water from the WRIA. A water supply utility is defined as a water, combined water-sewer, irrigation, reclamation, or public utility district that provides water service or an entity administering a publicly governed water supply system on behalf of a county. In certain WRIAs of the state, the largest quantity of water is being obtained by an irrigation district through the federal Columbia Basin Project, so that the water does not originate from the WRIA. Under current law, this appears to preclude the irrigation district from acting as an initiating government for watershed planning.

Summary of Amended Bill: For a WRIA in the Columbia Basin Project, the water supply utility that obtains the largest quantity of water for the WRIA from the Project can be an initiating government.

Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill: Instead of deeming a water supply utility that receives water from a federal agency to be obtaining that water from the WRIA which the utility serves, the bill expressly allows a Columbia Basin Project utility to be an initiating government.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: Irrigation districts supplying Columbia Basin Project water to Grant and Franklin counties apparently cannot be initiating governments for watershed planning. Although they obtain the largest quantity of water for their WRIA, the water is not originally diverted within the WRIA. The local entities who would currently be able to be initiating governments agree that these irrigation districts should be able to be initiating governments.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Rep. G. Chandler, prime sponsor; Mike Schwisow, WA State Water Resources Assn. (pro).