

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 5586

As Passed Senate, March 13, 2001

Title: An act relating to water resource inventory area planning.

Brief Description: Modifying provisions concerning how water resource inventory areas receive funds to conduct planning.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Environment, Energy & Water (originally sponsored by Senators Fraser, Morton and Regala; by request of Department of Ecology).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Environment, Energy & Water: 2/13/01, 2/20/01 [DPS].

Passed Senate: 3/13/01, 47-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY & WATER

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5586 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Fraser, Chair; Regala, Vice Chair; Eide, Hale, Honeyford, Jacobsen, McDonald, Morton and Patterson.

Staff: Genevieve Pisarski (786-7488)

Background: Under Chapter 90.82 RCW, watershed planning is conducted according to water resource inventory area (WRIA), which corresponds to a river basin. Planning is conducted in three phases: (1) organization of a planning unit and determination of the scope of planning, which must include a water quantity component and may also include instream flow, water quality, and habitat components; (2) water quantity assessment and development of strategies for future use, and, if flow, quality, or habitat components have also been included, specified examination and recommendation requirements for each; and (3) development of a watershed plan and recommendations for action. For each phase, a planning unit can apply to the Department of Ecology for funding. Up to \$50,000 can be provided for phase one; up to \$200,000, for phase two; and up to \$250,000, for phase three. If a planning unit receives funding beyond phase one, it must submit a proposed plan to the counties that have territory in the WRIA within four years of when funds were first received.

Summary of Bill: A planning unit that includes an instream flow, water quality, or habitat component may apply for up to an additional \$100,000 for phase two. Additional funds must be spent for assessments directly related to instream flow, water quality, or habitat components. Within the total amount that is available to a planning unit for phase two and phase three together, a unit can request a different amount for each phase than what is currently specified, if it demonstrates that this will not impair the unit's ability to complete its plan. A planning unit must submit its proposed plan within four years of when funding beyond the initial, organizing funding is first drawn upon.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: Additional funding for assessments of additional components is needed. Units that receive phase 1 and phase 2 funding simultaneously should have the same amount of time as units that receive phase 2 funding later. Additional funding should be tied directly to the additional components. Establishment of instream flows must not be delayed.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Jim Miller, City of Everett (pro); Toni McKinley, WA State Grange (pro); Josh Baldi, WA Env. Council (concerns); Paul Parker, WA Assn. of Counties (pro); Mike Schwisow, WA State Water Resources Assn. (pro).