

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5586

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Environment, Energy & Water, February 20, 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: 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].

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 Substitute 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.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The requirement that additional funding must be spent on assessments directly related to habitat, instream flow, or water quality components is added. The current requirement that proposed plans must be submitted within four years of when funding beyond initial funding is first received is changed to be within four years of when it 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).