

FINAL BILL REPORT

ESB 6726

C 327 L 02
Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Protecting dairy farmers from unwarranted complaints.

Sponsors: Senators Rasmussen and Honeyford.

Senate Committee on Agriculture & International Trade
House Committee on Agriculture & Ecology

Background: In 1993, it became mandatory for the Department of Ecology to investigate complaints filed against dairy farms for alleged violations of water quality laws. Written complaints must be investigated within three working days and a written report of the department's finding is to be issued.

In 1998, the state enacted the Dairy Nutrient Management Act that provides for the inspection of dairy farms. In addition, dairy farms must develop dairy nutrient management plans. These plans must be approved by the local conservation district by July 1, 2002, unless federal and state funding to support technical assistance is insufficient. A plan must be certified being fully implemented by December 31, 2003.

Oregon has had a system to reduce the number of unwarranted complaints against dairy farms.

Summary: The Department of Ecology may consider past complaints against the same dairy farm from the same person and the results of its previous inspections, and has discretion to decide whether to conduct an inspection if a similar complaint was filed during the preceding six months and there was no violation found. If the decision is to not conduct an inspection, the department must document its decision and notify the complainant and the dairy producer. Findings of inspections are to be retained in the department's administrative records.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	48 0
House	93 0

Effective: June 13, 2002