

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6734

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Labor, Commerce & Financial Institutions, February 6, 2002

Title: An act relating to connection of mobile home parks to public sewer systems.

Brief Description: Authorizing local governments to require that septic systems be removed in areas designated as critical for aquifer recharging.

Sponsors: Senators Brown and Prentice.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Labor, Commerce & Financial Institutions: 2/6/02 [DP, DNP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, COMMERCE & FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Prentice, Chair; Keiser, Vice Chair; Fairley, Franklin, Gardner, Rasmussen and Regala.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Benton, Honeyford, West and Winsley.

Staff: Kim Johnson (786-7486)

Background: Cities, towns, and counties are authorized to construct, maintain, and operate systems of sewerage. Water-sewer districts have the express authority to compel property owners within an area served by the district's sewers to connect to the sewer system. However, cities, towns, and counties lack the express statutory authority to compel property owners to connect to sewers.

A city or county may use more restrictive standards for failing septic systems if it determines that it is necessary to protect the public health, attain state water quality standards, or protect shellfish and other public resources.

Currently the law provides that when local boards of health identify a failing septic system, cities, towns and counties may require an existing mobile home park to replace the failing system.

Summary of Bill: A city, town or county may require an existing mobile home park to replace an existing, functional septic system with a sewer system if the mobile home park is within an area designated under the Growth Management Act as an area with critical recharging effects on aquifers used for potable water.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: Spokane County sits on top of a "sole source aquifer" which is the sole drinking water supply for over 300,000 people in the region. Monitoring of the water quality in the aquifer has shown an increase in nitrate levels in those areas not connected to sewers. Exempting mobile home parks from connecting to the sewers does not make sense and endangers the aquifer and only drinking water for the region.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Bruce Rawls, Spokane County; Ed Thorpe, Coalition for Clean Water.