

2993

Sponsor(s): Representatives Linville and Kirby

Brief Description: Modifying water provisions.

HB 2993.E - DIGEST

(DIGEST AS ENACTED)

Recognizes the critical importance of providing and securing sufficient water to meet the needs of people, farms, and fish.

Finds that an effective way to meet the water needs of people, farms, and fish is through strategies developed and implemented at the local watershed level. The objectives of these strategies are to supply water in sufficient quantities to satisfy the following three water resource objectives: (1) Providing sufficient water for residential, commercial, and industrial needs;

(2) Providing sufficient water for productive fish populations; and

(3) Providing sufficient water for productive agriculture.

Directs the department to, through a network of water masters appointed under this chapter, stream patrollers appointed under chapter 90.08 RCW, and other assigned compliance staff to the extent such a network is funded, achieve compliance with the water laws and rules of the state of Washington in the following sequence: (1) The department shall prepare and distribute technical and educational information to the general public to assist the public in complying with the requirements of their water rights and applicable water laws;

(2) When the department determines that a violation has occurred or is about to occur, it shall first attempt to achieve voluntary compliance. As part of this first response, the department shall offer information and technical assistance to the person in writing identifying one or more means to accomplish the person's purposes within the framework of the law; and

(3) If education and technical assistance do not achieve compliance the department shall issue a notice of violation, a formal administrative order under RCW 43.27A.190, or assess penalties under RCW 90.03.600 unless the noncompliance is corrected expeditiously or the department determines no impairment or harm.

Declares that nothing in the act is intended to prevent the department of ecology from taking immediate action to cause a violation to be ceased immediately if in the opinion of the department the nature of the violation is causing harm to other water rights or to public resources.

Requires the department of ecology to, to the extent practicable, station its compliance personnel within the watershed communities they serve. To the extent practicable, compliance personnel shall be distributed evenly among the regions of the state.