

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESB 5343

As Passed House:

April 11, 2003

Title: An act relating to watershed planning.

Brief Description: Allowing WRIA 40 to be divided for the purposes of chapter 90.82 RCW.

Sponsors: By Senators Parlette, Doumit, Mulliken, Hale and Deccio.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Agriculture & Natural Resources: 3/14/03, 3/21/03 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 4/11/03, 86-2.

Brief Summary of Engrossed Bill

- Divides water resource inventory area (WRIA) number 40 into two parts and allows each to be eligible for one-half of the grant monies available for conducting planning in a single WRIA.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Linville, Chair; Rockefeller, Vice Chair; Schoesler, Ranking Minority Member; Kristiansen, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Chandler, Eickmeyer, Hunt, McDermott, Orcutt, Quall and Sump.

Staff: Kenneth Hirst (786-7105).

Background:

The Water Resources Act directs the Department of Ecology (DOE) to develop a comprehensive state water resources program for making decisions on future water resource allocation and use. The act permits the DOE to develop the program in segments. Under the act, the DOE has divided the state into 62 water resource inventory areas (WRIAs).

WRIA number 40 is for the Alkali-Squilchuck area. The WRIA contains a number of creeks that empty into the Columbia River separately from the western side of the river in an area that stretches from just south of the City of Wenatchee in Chelan County, along the Columbia River border of Kittitas County, to Priest Rapids Dam in Yakima County. Two of the creeks, Squilchuck and Stemilt Creeks, join the Columbia River just downstream of the City of Wenatchee. Alkali Creek joins the Columbia across from the town of Mattawa.

State law allows watershed planning to be conducted through a locally initiated process. If planning is conducted under this process, it must include a component on current and future water availability and use. It may include components regarding instream flows, water quality, and habitat. Watershed planning may be conducted for one watershed or water resource inventory area (WRIA) or it may be conducted for multiple WRIsAs.

Summary of Bill:

For the purposes of the state's locally initiated watershed planning laws, WRIA number 40 is divided into the portion containing the Stemilt and Squilchuck basins (designated as WRIA 40a) and the remaining area (WRIA 40b). Watershed planning may be conducted separately for these two areas. WRIA 40a is eligible to receive one-fourth and WRIA 40b is eligible to receive three-fourths of the -planning grant monies available to a single WRIA under these laws.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: The DOE has supported the initiation of watershed planning for WRIA 40, but because of the disperse nature of the WRIA, no planning has been initiated. The Squilchuck and Stemilt portion of the WRIA is better suited to such planning because it is the only portion where people, agriculture, and fish issues come together.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Dick Wallace, Department of Ecology.