

FINAL BILL REPORT

HB 1526

C 70 L 03

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Revising provisions relating to cost-reimbursement agreements between state agencies and permit applicants.

Sponsors: By Representatives Linville, Armstrong, Haigh, Morris, Cooper, Mastin, Gombosky, Delvin, Grant, Schoesler, Sullivan, Chandler and Schual-Berke.

House Committee on Fisheries, Ecology & Parks
Senate Committee on Natural Resources, Energy & Water

Background:

Cost-reimbursement agreements allow an applicant for a state or local government permit or lease to provide funds for the staff necessary to process the required application in a timely manner. Voluntary cost-reimbursement agreements may be negotiated between applicants for complex permits and the departments of Ecology, Natural Resources, Health, Fish and Wildlife, and local air pollution control authorities. The Department of Natural Resources may also use these agreements for any lease application except aquatic leases. A complex permit is defined as a permit which requires an environmental impact statement.

Under a cost-reimbursement agreement, the applicant pays the reasonable costs incurred by the agency or local pollution control authority for permit coordination, environmental review, application review, technical studies, permit processing, and compliance with requirements of other relevant laws. The agreement must identify the specific tasks, costs, and schedule for work to be conducted. Funds under a cost-reimbursement agreement are used by the agency to contract with independent consultants to carry out the work covered by the agreement. The funds may also be used to assign current staff to review the consultants' work and to provide necessary technical assistance when an independent consultant with comparable technical skills is unavailable.

No new cost-reimbursement agreement may be negotiated after July 1, 2005. An agency may continue to administer any cost-reimbursement agreement which was entered into before July 1, 2005, until the project is completed.

Summary:

The deadline for entering into voluntary cost-reimbursement agreements between applicants for permits and the departments of Ecology, Natural Resources, Health, Fish

and Wildlife, and local air pollution control authorities is extended from July 1, 2005, to July 1, 2007.

Provisions that only complex projects requiring an environmental impact statement qualify for cost-reimbursement agreements are repealed.

Votes on Final Passage:

House 94 0

Senate 49 0

Effective: July 27, 2003