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**Agriculture & Natural Resources  
Committee**

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**HB 3062**

**Brief Description:** Concerning modifications to WRIA plans.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Newhouse, Chandler and Hinkle.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Expressly requires that any revision to an approved watershed plan made by the Department of Ecology (DOE) be first approved by the counties that originally approved the plan.

**Hearing Date:** 2/4/04

**Staff:** Kenneth Hirst (786-7105).

**Background:**

State law provides a process for conducting watershed planning through a locally initiated process. Such watershed planning may be conducted for one watershed or it may be conducted for multiple watersheds. For this purpose, the local governments that initiate the process select or create a planning unit and designate a lead agency to provide staff support for the planning unit. (RCW 90.82.060.) Once a plan is approved by the planning unit, it is submitted to each of the counties with territory in the watershed or watersheds for which planning was conducted. After publishing notice and conducting at least one public hearing per county, the legislative authorities of these counties are to approve or disapprove of the plan in a joint session. If approved by the counties, the plan is an approved watershed plan. (RCW 90.82.130.)

The laws governing this process were amended last year. Among the amendments were those specifying how the DOE may revise an approved watershed plan. Under the 2003 amendments, the DOE may develop and adopt modifications to the plan or obligations imposed by the plan only through a form of negotiated rule making that uses the same processes that applied in that watershed for developing the plan. Counties are also permitted, under certain circumstances, to opt out of the approval process. (Section 5, Chapter 4, Laws of 2003 1st Special Session and RCW 90.82.130.)

**Summary of Bill:**

The watershed planning laws are amended. Before any modification to an approved watershed plan may be adopted by the DOE, the modification must be approved by the legislative authorities of each of the counties that approved the original plan for the watershed.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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