

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESB 5014

As Passed Senate, February 26, 2003

Title: An act relating to public water projects.

Brief Description: Authorizing a new subaccount in the public works assistance account.

Sponsors: Senator Honeyford.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Energy & Water: 1/22/03, 2/6/03 [DP].
Passed Senate: 2/26/03, 49-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, ENERGY & WATER

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Morton, Chair; Hewitt, Vice Chair; Doumit, Fraser, Hale, Hargrove, Honeyford and Oke.

Staff: Sam Thompson (786-7413)

Background: The Public Works Assistance Account, commonly known as the Public Works Trust Fund, was created by the Legislature in 1985 to provide low-interest or interest-free loans to local governments to finance certain specified public works projects. The account receives revenue from the state real estate excise tax, utility and sales taxes on local water, sewer, and garbage collection, and loan repayments. The Public Works Board, within the Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development, is authorized to make loans from the account to local governments. Each year, the board submits a list of projects proposed to be funded from the account to the Legislature for approval.

Summary of Bill: The Public Works Board must create a new subaccount in the Public Works Assistance Account to fund local government water storage and water systems projects. Projects funded by subaccount funds must meet competitive bid requirements. The State Treasurer will provide monthly investment earnings to the subaccount based upon the subaccount's average daily balance during the month.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: This bill makes needed water storage projects “ particularly those relating to agriculture “ easier to fund.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Josh Baldi, Washington Environmental Council (no concern); Mike Moran, Center for Environmental Law and Policy and Samish Indian Nation (neutral); Denise Smith, League of Women Voters (withholding judgment); Charlie Brown, Washington State Potato Commission (pro); Scott Hazlegrove, Washington Association of Sewer and Water Districts (pro); Kathleen Collins, Washington Water Policy Alliance (pro).

House Amendment(s): The amendment: (1) provides that the subaccount will receive amounts appropriated to it for distribution as grants for water storage projects and water systems facilities projects; (2) clarifies that the subaccount will be administered by the Public Works Board and be separate from the other programs managed by the board; (3) specifies that the subaccount will be known as the water storage projects and water systems facilities subaccount of the public works assistance account; and adds an emergency clause.