

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## ESB 5343

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As Passed Senate, February 26, 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:** Senators Parlette, Doumit, Mulliken, Hale and Deccio.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Natural Resources, Energy & Water: 2/7/03, 2/12/03 [DP].  
Passed Senate: 2/26/03, 49-0.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, ENERGY & WATER

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

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

**Staff:** Evan Sheffels (786-7486)

**Background:** Under Chapter 90.82 RCW, watershed planning is conducted according to the Water Resource Inventory Area (WRIA). Each WRIA corresponds to a watershed or river basin.

Watershed planning is conducted in three phases: (1) initiation and organization of a planning unit; (2) water quantity assessment and future use strategy; and (3) development of a watershed plan and recommendations for action. The phase three efforts of the earliest formed planning units are expected to come to fruition, in the form of completed watershed plans submitted to county legislative authorities, in 2003.

RCW 90.82.130 provides that the legislative authority of each county with territory in a watershed must conduct at least one public hearing on a proposed watershed plan, after which they must convene in a joint session to consider the plan. By majority vote, the members of each affected county can approve or reject, but not amend, the plan. Once adopted, watershed plan obligations are binding on county governments. Counties must also adopt implementing ordinances, as necessary, setting out how binding obligations within the plan will be implemented.

Upon application, the Department of Ecology (DOE) is authorized to provide up to \$50,000 for phase one in single WRIA planning units, and up to \$75,000 in multi-WRIA units; up to \$200,000 for phase two; and up to \$250,000 for phase three.

**Summary of Bill:** WRIA 40 is split into two separate WRIA planning segments, 40a and 40b. Proposed WRIA 40a contains the Stemilt and Squilchuck watershed subbasins. WRIA

40b extends south of WRIA 40a and borders the western edge of the Columbia River through Kittitas, Yakima, and Benton counties.

WRIA 40a and 40b are each eligible for one-half of the funding available for a single WRIA.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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

**Testimony For:** This bill would only split one WRIA for planning purposes; it would not create another WRIA. The bill is needed due to the unique issues presented by WRIA 40 and the needs and configuration of the planning units involved.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** Senator Parlette, prime sponsor (pro); Jim Waldo, Governor's Office (comments); Jim Halstrom, WA State Horticulture Assn. (pro); Toni McKinley, WA State Grange (pro).

**House Amendment(s):** Funding allocations are changed. The Stemilt-Squilchuck portion of WRIA 40 is eligible for one-fourth (rather than one-half) of the funding available for a single WRIA, and the remaining portion of the WRIA is eligible for the remaining three-fourths of the funding available for a single WRIA.