

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1247

As Passed House:

March 8, 2005

Title: An act relating to charging manufactured housing communities for water and sewer connections.

Brief Description: Charging manufactured housing communities for water and sewer connections.

Sponsors: By Representatives Morris and Schindler.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Housing: 2/1/05, 2/8/05 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/8/05, 98-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- States that manufactured housing communities may not be charged tap or connection fees for individual lots unless individual connections to those lots are provided and maintained by the water and/or sewer system provider.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Miloscia, Chair; Springer, Vice Chair; Holmquist, Ranking Minority Member; Dunn, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; McCune, Ormsby, Pettigrew, Schindler and Sells.

Staff: Robyn Dupuis (786-7166).

Background:

Under the Municipal Water and Sewer Facilities Act, every system provider, be it a municipality, county, or the commissioners of any district which operates a water or sewer system, has full authority to manage, regulate and control the rates and charges for the service and facilities, and to levy charges for connection to the system.

In the case of manufactured housing communities, water and sewer system providers run specified water and sewer lines up to the community property line. At the property line, the system providers install one tap-in connection with a meter. This connection enables the community to access water and sewer services. The service provider charges a "connection

charge" to the property owner based upon the size of the meter which is dependent upon the number of units within the community; for example, a single family residential meter may measure 3/4 - 1 inch, whereas an apartment complex or a manufactured housing community meter may measure 2 inches. The manufactured home community property owner provides and maintains the infrastructure necessary to connect individual lots to the main water and sewer line. Through periodic meter readings, the system provider monitors the water use of the entire community and bills the property owner, who is responsible for payment. Community property owners typically either approximate and build the cost of water and sewer into pad rental charges, or, at the time of invoice, divide the bill amongst the number of manufactured home owners and bill the units separately.

In at least one instance, a system provider has charged a manufactured home community property owner with multiple charges based upon the number of units within the community, instead of based upon the number of actual tap-in connections and meters which were provided and are maintained by the service provider.

Summary of Bill:

A service provider may not charge tap or connection charges for individual lots within a manufactured housing community if that service provider has not provided and does not maintain specified connections to those individual lots.

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: A manufactured housing community has been charged meter fees for each of the lots in his community when the water and sewer system provider only provided and serviced one master meter at the property line. Providers certainly are entitled to charge for water and sewage usage, as well as a connection charge for the single hook up, but if a provider doesn't install and maintain individual connections and meters at each unit then they shouldn't be allowed to impose per-unit charges. These charges are passed on to the mobile home owners which contributes to higher rental costs for manufactured home pads and thus reduces the affordability of this housing type.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Ken Spencer and John Woodring, Manufactured Housing Community of Washington; and Nick Federici, Washington Low Income Housing Alliance.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.