
**Agriculture & Natural Resources
Committee**

SSB 5074

Brief Description: Dividing water resource inventory area 29 into WRIA 29a and WRIA 29b.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Water, Energy & Telecommunications (originally sponsored by Senators Honeyford, Poulsen, Schoesler and Delvin).

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Bifurcates Watershed Resource Inventory Area 29 into two distinct planning units under the Watershed Planning Act.

Hearing Date:

Staff: Jason Callahan (786-7117).

Background:

Watershed Planning

The Watershed Planning Act [Chapter 90.82 RCW] establishes a process through which local groups can develop and implement plans for managing and protecting local water resources and rights. The local groups authorized to develop watershed plans are organized by water resource inventory areas (WRIAs). A WRIA is, generally speaking, an area determined to be a distinct watershed.

There are 62 WRIAs identified by the Department of Ecology (Department). Each WRIA is identified by a number and may contain a local watershed planning group with an identified lead entity. WRIA 40, which is located in central Washington, is unique in that the Legislature specifically bifurcated the watershed into two distinct WRIAs and authorized separate planning processes for each WRIA.

Once constituted, a WRIA is eligible for grant funding from the Department. There are funding opportunities available for both planning and implementation.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Not all WRIAs are in the same stage of development. Some WRIA planning groups are implementing their plans, while others have yet to have a local watershed group form. In between, there are WRIA groups that have an approved plan awaiting implementation, WRIA groups still developing the local plan, WRIA groups where the planning process has been terminated, and WRIA groups with developed plans awaiting county approval.

WRIA 29

WRIA 29 is the Wind-White Salmon watershed, and is located in Yakima, Klickitat, and Skamania counties. The WRIA surrounds the city of White Salmon, and drains into the Columbia River. The lead agency for the WRIA 29 watershed group is Skamania County and the governments initiating the planning process are the counties sharing the WRIA, along with the Yakama Nation, the City of White Salmon, and the Skamania Public Utility District.

The Department has awarded the WRIA 29 planning group with \$500,000 in grants through the year 2005, and the planning group has initiated a planning process, but has not begun implementation.

Summary of Bill:

WRIA 29 is bifurcated into two distinct planning units under the Watershed Planning Act. WRIA 29b is to be identified as the areas east of the White Salmon sub-basin, and WRIA 29a is to be all other areas of the existing WRIA 29.

The new WRIA 29a is eligible for full funding under the Watershed Planning Act, while WRIA 29b is only eligible for half of the funding normally made available to a WRIA under the Watershed Planning Act.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available. New fiscal note requested on March 12, 2007.

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