

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1295

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Water, Energy & Telecommunications, February 20, 2008

Title: An act relating to water resource inventory area 14.

Brief Description: Dividing water resource inventory area 14 into WRIA 14a and WRIA 14b.

Sponsors: House Committee on Select Committee on Puget Sound (originally sponsored by Representatives Eickmeyer and Upthegrove).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/05/07, 95-0; 2/04/08, 97-0.

Committee Activity: Water, Energy & Telecommunications: 3/27/07, 3/30/07 [DPA-WM];
2/20/08 [DPA].

Ways & Means: 4/02/07 [DPA(WET), w/oRec].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WATER, ENERGY & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Rockefeller, Chair; Murray, Vice Chair; Honeyford, Ranking Minority Member; Delvin, Fraser, Hatfield, Holmquist, Morton and Regala.

Staff: Karen Epps (786-7424)

Background: The Watershed Planning Act 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 or river basin.

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. Once constituted, a WRIA is eligible for grant funding from the Department.

Watershed planning is eligible for grant funding from the Department and is conducted in four phases: (1) initiation and organization of a planning unit – \$50,000 for single WRIA planning units, and up to \$75,000 in multi-WRIA units; (2) water quantity assessment and future use strategy – up to \$200,000; (3) development of a watershed plan and recommendations for action – up to \$250,000; and (4) implementation of the plan – up to \$100,000 for phase four stage for each of the first three years of implementation and an additional two-year extension of up to \$50,000 for each year of the extension-for a total phase four funding potential of \$400,000.

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.

The WRIA 14 is the Kennedy-Goldsborough watershed and is located in Mason and Thurston counties. The WRIA surrounds the city of Shelton, and drains into both the Hood Canal and the furthest extremes of southern Puget Sound. The lead agency for the WRIA 14 watershed group is the Mason County Department of Community Development; and the initiating governments are Mason County, a local public utility district, the City of Shelton, Thurston County, and the Squaxin Island Indian Tribe.

The local watershed group completed a draft plan in 2006; however, the unanimous consensus of the initiating governments was not reached and the planning process was terminated. Prior to the termination, the WRIA 14 group had received \$770,000 in grants from the Department.

Summary of Bill (Recommended Amendments): The WRIA 14 is divided into two separate areas. Those portions of WRIA 14 draining into the Hood Canal are designated as WRIA 14b, and other portions of WRIA 14 are designated WRIA 14a. Planning responsibilities for WRIA 14b are transferred to the WRIA 16 planning unit, which is located just to the north of WRIA 14 in the Skokomish-Dosewallips watershed. Both WRIA 14a and 14b are scheduled to receive one half of the planning money reserved for a single WRIA.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY WATER, ENERGY & TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE (Recommended Amendments): The amendment removes the requirement that the 50:50 fund sharing ratio be made available to all other WRIAs that have been created by the division of an original WRIA into two or more WRIAs for the implementation of an approved watershed plan.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Substitute Bill: PRO: WRIA 16 has been planning and including the portion of WRIA 14 that will become WRIA 14b with the passage of this bill. WRIA 16 is the only WRIA planning for all of Hood Canal. The Legislature has divided two other WRIAs, so there is precedence in splitting the funding between WRIA 14a and WRIA 14b.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Mike Petz, WRIA 16; Tom Clingman, Department of Ecology.