

FINAL BILL REPORT

SSB 5074

C 245 L 07

Synopsis as Enacted

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).

Senate Committee on Water, Energy & Telecommunications
House Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources

Background: The Watershed Planning Act establishes a mechanism for conducting watershed planning through a locally initiated process through which local groups can develop and implement plans for managing and protecting local water resources and rights. The process requires watershed planning to include an assessment of water supply and use in the planning area and development of strategies for future water use. The assessment may also include water quality, habitat, and instream flow elements.

The local groups authorized to develop watershed plans are organized by water resource inventory areas (WRIA). Usually, a WRIA is an area determined to be a distinct watershed or river basin. There are currently 62 WRIsAs identified by the Department of Ecology.

The department provides grant funding to eligible local groups developing watershed plans. The local groups conduct watershed planning in four phases and the WRIsAs are in various stages of development. The local group is eligible to receive up to a certain amount of funding for each phase as follows: (1) initiation and organization of a planning unit – \$50,000 for single WRIA planning units and \$75,000 for multi-WRIA units; (2) water quantity assessment and future use strategy – \$200,000; (3) development of a watershed plan and recommendations for action - \$250,000; and (4) implementation of the plan – \$100,000 for the first three years of implementation and \$50,000 for each additional year, up two years (\$400,000 phase 4 funding potential).

The Legislature bifurcated WRIA 40, located in central Washington, into two distinct WRIsAs and authorized separate planning processes. Between WRIA 40a and 40b, the assigned funding is split so that one WRIA receives 25 percent of the available funding and the other WRIA receives 75 percent of the available funding.

WRIA 29 is the Wind-White Salmon River Basin located in south-central Washington and encompasses an area of more than 900 square miles that includes areas in Skamania, Klickitat, and Yakima Counties. WRIA 29 was divided into six subbasins. The four major subbasins listed from west to east include: Rock Creek, Wind River, Little White Salmon, and White Salmon River. WRIA 29b designation is requested for White Salmon River basin. The lead agency for the WRIA 29 watershed group is Skamania County, and the initiating governments are Klickitat County, Yakima County, City of White Salmon, Skamania County,

Skamania PUD, and the Yakama Nation. To date, WRIA 29 has received \$500,000 for the first three phases of planning.

Summary: WRIA 29 is divided into two separate areas. The portions of WRIA 29 located entirely within the White Salmon subbasin, as well as the subbasins to the east, are designated as WRIA 29b. The remaining areas are designated WRIA 29a. WRIA 29a and 29b each are eligible for one-half of the funding available for a single WRIA.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	45	0	
House	95	0	(House amended)
Senate	48	0	(Senate concurred)

Effective: July 22, 2007