

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5113

As Passed Senate, March 8, 2007

Title: An act relating to barley straw for water clarification.

Brief Description: Authorizing the application of barley straw to waters of the state.

Sponsors: Senators Schoesler, Rasmussen, Holmquist, Clements, Morton, Hatfield and Pridemore.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Agriculture & Rural Economic Development: 1/22/07. [DP].
Passed Senate: 3/08/07, 47-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Rasmussen, Chair; Hatfield, Vice Chair; Schoesler, Ranking Minority Member; Morton and Shin.

Staff: Bob Lee (786-7404)

Background: Studies have shown that barley straw can reduce the growth of algae when used in specific ways. There is interest in making barley straw available for water clarification purposes in ponds and other bodies of water.

Summary of Bill: The application of barley straw to waters of the state for purposes of water clarification does not require a state waste discharge permit if certain conditions are met. The conditions include: limiting the amount of barley straw that may be used for a given surface area of water; that whole bales of densely packed straw are not to be used but instead straw is to be loosely packed in nylon or mesh bags; that bags be placed in areas where control is desired; that bags are to be staked or anchored in place; that bags be placed in the early spring prior to algae growth; and that bags be removed four to six months after placement and before winter. This section does not alter any permit requirements that may exist under the Hydraulic Project Approval statutes.

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.

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.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Barley straw has been used for many years in Europe for water clarification purposes. Golf courses are interested in using it in their ponds. This represents a marketing niche for barley producers.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Jim Armstrong, Spokane County Conservation District.