

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6275

As Passed Senate, February 15, 2008

Title: An act relating to drainage district commissioners' authority.

Brief Description: Granting authority for drainage district commissioners to implement drainage maintenance plans.

Sponsors: Senators Haugen and Rasmussen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Agriculture & Rural Economic Development: 1/31/08, 2/04/08 [DP].
Passed Senate: 2/15/08, 48-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: Do pass.

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

Staff: Bob Lee (786-7404)

Background: The formation of drainage districts is authorized under state laws dating back to 1895. The board of a drainage district consists of three elected commissioners. The commissioners are authorized to develop a general plan of improvement and to carry out a number of activities with respect to maintenance, improvement, construction, alternation, or abandonment of existing drains or ditches.

Summary of Bill: Drainage districts are explicitly authorized to implement the provisions of drainage maintenance plans that have been adopted by the district.

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: PRO: Issues between drainage districts and the Department of Fish and Wildlife became contentious a few years ago. Both sides put in resources and began to collaborate on finding solutions that will protect agricultural lands that depends on properly operating drainage systems and also will address the needs of fish. The updated drainage district plans have components that address the fish habitat. This will result

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in the issuance of a programmatic hydraulic permit that is good for five year periods and is renewable. This legislation is needed to give explicit authority to the districts so they can implement these drainage plans.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Mike Shelby, Western Washington Agricultural Association; Greg Hueckel, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.