

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5578

As of February 3, 2009

Title: An act relating to water resource management.

Brief Description: Regarding water resource management.

Sponsors: Senators Schoesler, Honeyford, Morton and Delvin.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Environment, Water & Energy:

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT, WATER & ENERGY

Staff: Karen Epps (786-7424)

Background: All groundwater withdrawals require an application and permit from the Department of Ecology (Ecology). Exemptions from this permit requirement include any withdrawal of public groundwater for stock watering purposes, or for watering a lawn or a noncommercial garden less than one half an acre. Single or group domestic uses or industrial purposes in an amount not exceeding 5,000 gallons a day are also exempt.

Ecology has the authority to require the person or agency making any withdrawals from an exempt well to furnish information as to the means for and the quantity of that withdrawal.

Summary of Bill: The definition of stock watering is all reasonable uses of water normally associated with the care and management of livestock including, but not limited to, drinking, feeding, cleaning of stalls, washing livestock, washing equipment used in the feeding or milking of livestock, controlling dust around livestock, and cooling livestock.

A permit exempt well withdrawing water for stock watering purposes must not withdraw more than 350 acre feet of water per year. If the permit exempt well owner plans on withdrawing more than 15,000 gallons a day for stock watering purposes, the well owner must submit to Ecology: (1) a report of examination describing the quantity of water to be withdrawn; (2) the development schedule; (3) a metering plan; (4) a water right impairment analysis prepared by a qualified hydrologist or engineer; (5) proof of compliance with any applicable county land use planning requirements; (6) proof of compliance with applicable state environmental policy act requirements; and (7) generally applicable well construction and reporting requirements.

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.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

[OFM requested ten-year cost projection pursuant to I-960.]

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.