
**Agriculture & Natural Resources
Committee**

HB 2212

Brief Description: Extending the expiration date of RCW 90.90.030.

Sponsors: Representatives Blake and Chandler; by request of Department of Ecology.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Extends the Department of Ecology's authority to enter into voluntary regional agreements in the Columbia River basin for the purposes of providing new water for out-of-stream use from June 30, 2012, to June 30, 2018.

Hearing Date: 1/11/12

Staff: Jason Callahan (786-7117).

Background:

The Department of Ecology (Department) has the authority, which expires on June 30, 2012, to enter into voluntary regional agreements (VRA) between the Department and a water user that provides for the appropriation of new water for out-of-stream use developed in the Columbia river basin. Any VRA must protect instream flows. Specifically, any new water appropriated under a VMA must not have a negative impact on season instream flows in the main stem of the Columbia and Snake rivers.

The Department must follow specific notification and consultation procedures prior to entering into a VRA. This process includes a consultation with county legislative authorities, the Department of Fish and Wildlife, affected tribal governments, and the federal government.

The VRAs entered into by the Department prior to June 30, 2012, remain in effect after June 30, 2012. However, after that date, the Department does not have the authority to enter into additional VRAs.

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.

Summary of Bill:

The Department's authority to enter into VMAs for the purposes of providing new water for out-of-stream use in the Columbia River basin is extended from June 30, 2012, to June 30, 2018.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.