

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 6027

As Reported by House Committee On:
Environment

Title: An act relating to publicly owned industrial wastewater treatment facilities.

Brief Description: Concerning publicly owned industrial wastewater treatment facilities.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Environment (originally sponsored by Senator Honeyford).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Environment: 2/17/12, 2/21/12 [DP].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Authorizes the Department of Ecology (DOE) to make loans to publicly-owned industrial wastewater treatment facilities that relieve a city of the burden of processing industrial wastewater.
- Authorizes the DOE to use moneys in the Water Pollution Control Revolving Fund to make loans for the planning, design, and construction of publicly-owned wastewater treatment facilities.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 17 members: Representatives Upthegrove, Chair; Tharinger, Vice Chair; Short, Ranking Minority Member; Harris, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Crouse, Fitzgibbon, Hansen, Jinkins, Morris, Moscoso, Nealey, Pearson, Pollet, Shea, Takko, Taylor and Wylie.

Staff: Anna Jackson (786-7194).

Background:

Under state law, the Department of Ecology (DOE) is authorized to make grants or loans for water pollution control facilities and activities to any state agency, local government, conservation district, or other political subdivision, municipal corporation, quasi-municipal corporation, or federally recognized tribe. A water pollution control facility is defined as any

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facility or system for the control, collection, storage, treatment, disposal, or recycling of wastewater, including sanitary sewage, storm water, residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural wastes that are causing water quality degradation due to concentrations of pollutants.

In addition, the DOE administers the state Water Pollution Control Revolving Fund, which was created to receive federal capitalization grants to provide financial assistance to the state and local governments for the planning, design, acquisition, construction, and improvement of water pollution control facilities and related activities in the achievement of state and federal water pollution control requirements for the protection of the state's waters.

Currently, publicly-owned industrial wastewater treatment facilities are ineligible for these funding programs, unless the project under consideration is shown to directly benefit residential ratepayers. The use of state funds for publicly-owned facilities serving industrial wastewater is not authorized by the DOE's policies and rules, with priority instead given for funding publicly-owned residential wastewater treatment facilities.

Summary of Bill:

The DOE is authorized to provide loans to publicly-owned industrial wastewater treatment facilities that relieve a city of the burden of processing industrial wastewater.

The DOE is authorized to use moneys in the Water Pollution Control Revolving Fund to make loans for the planning, design, and construction of publicly-owned wastewater treatment facilities, including publicly-owned industrial wastewater treatment facilities that relieve a city of the burden of processing industrial wastewater.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This bill would allow the Port of Sunnyside (Port) to be eligible for the low interest loans that the DOE administers. A deal was reached with the port district that would relieve the city of the need to expand its current plan. This project would also benefit fish.

The Port has owned and operated a municipal industrial wastewater treatment facility for about 40 years. Currently, there are two completely separate wastewater systems in the city – one domestic and one industrial – that the Port operates. Under state law, the Port is required to make sure industry pays for all operations, maintenance, and capital improvements.

Industry also pays for debt service. Since 1990 the Port has spent over \$20 million on the industrial wastewater treatment facility in order to improve environmental compliance. The Port has been working with the core of engineers to create a new wetland habitat to cool the water before entering the river, provide habitat, and provide assurance as to where the water will go in the future. The Port is in the process of looking for ways to fund this project, and this bill would allow the Port to apply for the DOE funds.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Senator Honeyford, prime sponsor; and Amber Hansen, Port of Sunnyside.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.