

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 5407

As Reported by House Committee On:
Environment

Title: An act relating to electronic filing of pollutant discharge elimination permit system applications.

Brief Description: Concerning electronic filing of pollutant discharge elimination permit system applications.

Sponsors: Senator Ericksen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Environment: 3/19/13, 3/20/13 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Department of Ecology to provide for the electronic filing of certain National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit materials.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Upthegrove, Chair; McCoy, Vice Chair; Short, Ranking Minority Member; Pike, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Farrell, Fey, Kagi, Liias, Morris, Nealey, Overstreet and Tharinger.

Staff: Jacob Lipson (786-7196).

Background:

The federal Clean Water Act establishes the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES), which regulates discharges of wastewater. The NPDES wastewater permits cover discharges from municipal sewers systems, industrial wastewater dischargers, stormwater, and other point source dischargers. The NPDES permitting authority is delegated to the state, allowing the Department of Ecology (DOE) to issue the NPDES permits to cities and counties, and permits are required for anyone who discharges to state surface waters. Water

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discharge permits can either be an individual permit issued to a single regulated facility, or a general permit for a group of similar dischargers at diverse locations.

The NPDES discharge permits are valid for five years. Permits may be reopened or modified at the instigation of the DOE or the permit holder as the result of new information or a change in facility operations. After a permit has been issued and becomes effective, the permit holder may be periodically required to submit certain data and other information to the DOE, including discharge monitoring results.

Summary of Bill:

The DOE must develop electronic forms and otherwise provide for the electronic filing of the NPDES permit applications, updates, revisions, and reported data.

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) The DOE already either offers, or is planning to offer, the ability to electronically file the NPDES permit applications and data. The NPDES monitoring data can currently be entered electronically through a web portal, as can construction general permit applications, which are the DOE's most prevalent type of permits. The DOE's current plan for migrating towards a NPDES-wide fully electronic permit application process involves bringing permits online when permit holders renew them every five years under the existing NPDES renewal schedules. Not all permit holders will be required to file electronically, but the option will be available in a manner consistent with other state efforts to increase options for electronic filings.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Don Seeberger, Department of Ecology; and Ben Buchholz, Darigold.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.