

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6060

As of January 24, 2014

Title: An act relating to public water systems.

Brief Description: Concerning certain public water systems.

Sponsors: Senators Angel, Bailey, Schoesler and Roach.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Governmental Operations: 1/23/14.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS

Staff: Karen Epps (786-7424)

Background: Public Water Systems. More than 5.5 million Washington residents receive their drinking water from Group A or Group B public water systems, representing roughly 85 percent of the state's population. Group A water systems either have 15 or more service connections, regularly serve 25 or more people 60 or more days per year, or serve 1000 or more people for two or more consecutive days. Group B water systems serve fewer than 15 connections and fewer than 25 people per day.

Some public water systems must submit a water system plan for review and approval by the Department of Health (Department). These public water systems include the following:

- systems having 1000 or more services;
- systems required to develop water system plans under the Public Water System Coordination Act of 1977;
- new systems or expanding systems; and
- other specified systems.

The Growth Management Act (GMA). GMA is the comprehensive land use planning framework for counties and cities in Washington. Originally enacted in 1990 and 1991, GMA establishes land use designation and environmental protection requirements for all Washington counties and cities, and a significantly wider array of planning duties for the 29 counties and the cities within them that are obligated to satisfy all planning requirements under GMA.

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.

GMA directs counties and cities that fully plan under GMA to adopt internally consistent comprehensive land use plans that are generalized, coordinated land use policy statements of the governing body. Comprehensive plans must address certain planning elements, including a land use element; a housing element; a capital facilities plan element; a utilities element; a rural element; a transportation element; an economic development element; and a park and recreation element.

GMA requires counties and cities to establish a program that identifies procedures and schedules for the public to participate in the development and amendment of comprehensive plans and development regulations. The program must include notice procedures that are reasonably calculated to provide notice to property owners and other affected and interested individuals, tribes, government agencies, businesses, school districts, and organizations of proposed amendments to comprehensive plans and development regulation. The procedures should provide for broad dissemination of proposals and alternatives, an opportunity for written comments, public meetings after the effective notice, a provision for open discussion, communication programs, information services, and consideration of and response to public comments.

Summary of Bill: Public water systems that are required to submit a plan to the Department should receive notice of proposed amendments to comprehensive plans and development regulations under the public participation program established by counties and cities.

The utilities element of a comprehensive plan must consist of the general location, proposed location, and capacity of all facilities of group A public water systems that are required to submit a water system plan to the Department.

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: This is a technical bill. This bill is designed to get the public water systems informed about the GMA planning process in their community. The GMA planning processes often proceed without notice to public water systems and with no request that they participate in the planning process. The water utility facilities are not included in an identified utility group in the utilities element of the comprehensive plan. The problem exists because while public water is essential, water utilities often do not receive the information about the planning process and as a result are not given the opportunity to participate in the planning process. This bill is designed to improve coordination between local governments planning under GMA and local water utilities. This bill will require local water utilities to provide information to local governments relative to existing and proposed facilities. Currently there are fewer than 300 public water systems that are required to submit plans to the Department.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Angel, prime sponsor; Jeffrey Johnson, Water Cooperative of Pierce County.