

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6516

As of February 6, 2014

Title: An act relating to creating a joint legislative task force to study financing options for water supply, flood control, and storm water projects.

Brief Description: Creating a joint legislative task force to study financing options for water supply, flood control, and storm water projects.

Sponsors: Senators Honeyford, Keiser, Ericksen, Braun and Chase.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Ways & Means: 2/06/14.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Staff: Brian Sims (786-7431)

Background: The capital budget has funded projects to respond to floods, water shortages, and to improve the management of storm water. Most existing flood control and water supply assets were constructed and funded by federal and local governments. These assets are aging and are inadequate to manage predicted changes in climate, cycles of drought and storms, population growth, and necessary development.

Recent appropriations for storm water planning, the Yakima basin integrated plan, and the Chehalis basin flood control project are examples of projects with estimated costs in the billions of dollars and no identified source of funding.

Summary of Bill: A joint legislative taskforce on financing options for water supply, flood control, and storm water projects is established. The taskforce includes eight legislators, two each from the four major caucuses of the Legislature, representing appropriate policy committees and Senate Ways and Means and House Capital Budget committees. The Governor or his representative may serve on the committee. The Governor must select four taskforce members representing local governments, with two representing communities at risk from scarce water and two representing communities at risk from flooding and storm water control problems.

The taskforce, through the appointment of expert workgroups, must review the following:

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- the risks from inadequate water supply, flood control, and storm water systems in various communities and water basins of the state;
- the advances in water supply, flood control, and storm water technology, engineering, and ecosystem management that offer reliable, affordable, and long-lasting benefits to the health and safety of residents, the sustainability of regional and state economic growth, and the protection and preservation of the state's natural resources;
- financing options for water supply, flood control, and storm water projects that offer reliable, affordable, and long-lasting benefits to the health and safety of residents, the sustainability of regional and state economic growth, and the protection and preservation of the state's natural resources. Financing options must identify options for incurring debt at the lowest cost and possible state and local revenues necessary to service that debt without diverting state general funds;
- governance options for setting priorities for financing water supply, flood control, and storm water projects and establishing state and local policies to ensure that the benefits from such projects are not eroded by a failure to adequately maintain such projects, or diminished by local decisions that exacerbate risks the project is intended to mitigate.

The taskforce must submit its findings and recommendations to the appropriate committees of the Legislature by December 1, 2015.

An appropriation of \$1 million is provided from the general fund for purposes of the taskforce; however, authority to spend amounts from the Public Works Assistance Account for the taskforce is also provided.

Appropriation: \$1,000,000.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 30, 2014.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: Yes.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.