
SENATE BILL 5998

State of Washington

64th Legislature

2015 Regular Session

By Senator Roach

Read first time 02/16/15. Referred to Committee on Agriculture,
Water & Rural Economic Development.

1 AN ACT Relating to the protection of groundwater; and amending
2 RCW 90.54.020.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 **Sec. 1.** RCW 90.54.020 and 2007 c 445 s 8 are each amended to
5 read as follows:

6 Utilization and management of the waters of the state shall be
7 guided by the following general declaration of fundamentals:

8 (1) Uses of water for domestic, stock watering, industrial,
9 commercial, agricultural, irrigation, hydroelectric power production,
10 mining, fish and wildlife maintenance and enhancement, recreational,
11 and thermal power production purposes, and preservation of
12 environmental and aesthetic values, and all other uses compatible
13 with the enjoyment of the public waters of the state, are declared to
14 be beneficial.

15 (2) Allocation of waters among potential uses and users shall be
16 based generally on the securing of the maximum net benefits for the
17 people of the state. Maximum net benefits shall constitute total
18 benefits less costs including opportunities lost.

19 (3) The quality of the natural environment shall be protected
20 and, where possible, enhanced as follows:

1 (a) Perennial rivers and streams of the state shall be retained
2 with base flows necessary to provide for preservation of wildlife,
3 fish, scenic, aesthetic and other environmental values, and
4 navigational values. Lakes and ponds shall be retained substantially
5 in their natural condition. Withdrawals of water which would conflict
6 therewith shall be authorized only in those situations where it is
7 clear that overriding considerations of the public interest will be
8 served.

9 (b) Waters of the state shall be of high quality. Regardless of
10 the quality of the waters of the state, all wastes and other
11 materials and substances proposed for entry into said waters shall be
12 provided with all known, available, and reasonable methods of
13 treatment prior to entry. Notwithstanding that standards of quality
14 established for the waters of the state would not be violated, wastes
15 and other materials and substances shall not be allowed to enter such
16 waters which will reduce the existing quality thereof, except in
17 those situations where it is clear that overriding considerations of
18 the public interest will be served. Technology-based effluent
19 limitations or standards for discharges for municipal water treatment
20 plants located on the Chehalis, Columbia, Cowlitz, Lewis, or Skagit
21 river shall be adjusted to reflect credit for substances removed from
22 the plant intake water if:

23 (i) The municipality demonstrates that the intake water is drawn
24 from the same body of water into which the discharge is made; and

25 (ii) The municipality demonstrates that no violation of receiving
26 water quality standards or appreciable environmental degradation will
27 result.

28 (4) The development of multipurpose water storage facilities
29 shall be a high priority for programs of water allocation, planning,
30 management, and efficiency. The department, other state agencies, and
31 local governments(~~(, and planning units formed under section 107 or~~
32 ~~108 of this act)~~) shall evaluate the potential for the development of
33 new storage projects and the benefits and effects of storage in
34 reducing damage to stream banks and property, increasing the use of
35 land, providing water for municipal, industrial, agricultural, power
36 generation, and other beneficial uses, and improving streamflow
37 regimes for fisheries and other instream uses.

38 (5) Adequate and safe supplies of water shall be preserved and
39 protected in potable condition to satisfy human domestic needs.

1 (6) Multiple-purpose impoundment structures are to be preferred
2 over single-purpose structures. Due regard shall be given to means
3 and methods for protection of fishery resources in the planning for
4 and construction of water impoundment structures and other artificial
5 obstructions.

6 (7) Federal, state, and local governments, individuals,
7 corporations, groups and other entities shall be encouraged to carry
8 out practices of conservation as they relate to the use of the waters
9 of the state. In addition to traditional development approaches,
10 improved water use efficiency, conservation, and use of reclaimed
11 water shall be emphasized in the management of the state's water
12 resources and in some cases will be a potential new source of water
13 with which to meet future needs throughout the state. Use of
14 reclaimed water shall be encouraged through state and local planning
15 and programs with incentives for state financial assistance
16 recognizing programs and plans that encourage the use of conservation
17 and reclaimed water use, and state agencies shall continue to review
18 and reduce regulatory barriers and streamline permitting for the use
19 of reclaimed water where appropriate.

20 (8) Development of water supply systems, whether publicly or
21 privately owned, which provide water to the public generally in
22 regional areas within the state shall be encouraged. Development of
23 water supply systems for multiple domestic use which will not serve
24 the public generally shall be discouraged where water supplies are
25 available from water systems serving the public.

26 (9) Full recognition shall be given in the administration of
27 water allocation and use programs to the natural interrelationships
28 of surface and groundwaters.

29 (10) The groundwaters of the state provide drinking water to many
30 Washington residents and must be managed so that both the quantity
31 and quality is maintained and protected for both present and future
32 generations. In all aspects of water resource management, withdrawals
33 that would deplete the quantity or damage the quality of a
34 groundwater source to an extent that it would jeopardize the source
35 must be discouraged.

36 (11) Expressions of the public interest will be sought at all
37 stages of water planning and allocation discussions.

1 (~~(11)~~) (12) Water management programs, including but not
2 limited to, water quality, flood control, drainage, erosion control
3 and storm runoff are deemed to be in the public interest.

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