

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1213

As Reported by House Committee On:
Local Government

Title: An act relating to promoting the use of greywater in urban buildings.

Brief Description: Promoting the use of greywater in urban buildings.

Sponsors: Representatives Farrell, Pollet, Peterson, Gregerson, Wylie, McBride, Doglio and Hudgins.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Local Government: 1/26/17, 2/15/17 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires the Department of Health (DOH), within its existing resources, to update its standards, procedures, and guidelines to authorize indoor greywater reuse in urban buildings by January 1, 2018.
- Requires the DOH to consult with the State Building Code Council in updating its standards, procedures, and guidelines addressing requirements associated with the implementation of greywater reuse.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 4 members: Representatives Appleton, Chair; McBride, Vice Chair; Gregerson and Peterson.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 3 members: Representatives Griffey, Ranking Minority Member; Pike, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Taylor.

Staff: Desiree Omlı (786-7383).

Background:

Greywater Reuse.

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.

The Department of Health (DOH) is responsible for developing standards, procedures, and guidelines, with input from technical experts, for the cost-effective reuse of greywater. Greywater is wastewater from bathtubs, showers, bathroom sinks, washing machines, dishwashers, and kitchen or utility sinks. Greywater does not include flows from a toilet or a urinal.

The criteria developed by the DOH must encourage the application of greywater reuse technology for conserving water resources or reducing wastewater load. Rules adopted by the DOH limit greywater to being used only for subsurface irrigation in which greywater is applied below the surface of the ground directly into the roots of plants.

State Building Code Council.

The State Building Code Council (SBCC) reviews, develops, and adopts the State Building Code. The State Building Code is comprised of several different codes which develop minimum performance standards and requirements for the construction, maintenance, and accessibility of structures. Most of the state building codes are national model codes that are adopted by reference and modified as appropriate to meet state-specific needs.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

By January 1, 2018, the DOH, within its existing resources, must update its standards, procedures, and guidelines to allow for the indoor reuse of greywater. Indoor reuse includes the flushing of toilets and the reuse of greywater for a building's heating and cooling needs.

The DOH, in consultation with the SBCC, and within its existing resources, must update its standards, procedures, and guidelines addressing the following requirements associated with the implementation of greywater reuse:

- treatment requirements for different greywater sources prior to its reuse; and
- standards for determining conditions in which greywater reuse is allowed for purposes of meeting building water use needs, or building heating and cooling needs.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill expands the ability to reuse greywater to buildings in all cities, instead of limiting the authorization to cities with a population over 95,000. In addition, the requirement that urban buildings reuse greywater is removed, and is now optional. The DOH must update its standards, procedures, and guidelines to authorize indoor greywater reuse by January 1, 2018. The requirement that the SBCC adopt rules is removed. The DOH is required to consult with the SBCC when updating its standards, procedures, and guidelines addressing specific requirements associated with the implementation of greywater reuse.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available. New fiscal note requested on February 15, 2017.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) It is important to figure out how to use water resources more efficiently. Greywater reuse has many environmental benefits. It gives the water supply in our state a longer life and protects against shortages due to environmental disasters that may occur, climate change, and an increase in population. Greywater reuse also protects against the need to use pure water sources. Washington has rich water resources, but to keep it that way in the midst of increases in population without the same increases in our watershed, discussion about protecting those resources needs to happen now. In addition, greywater reuse is an energy efficient strategy since there's a lot of energy exerted in the treatment of water. There are ways to improve the scope and scale of the project by, for example, using a community greywater system as opposed to individual systems for each building. This bill should, however, also address the use of rainwater, which is one of the most cost-effective reuses of water. Greywater reuse also saves money and reduces the cost of water bills.

(Opposed) The mandate requiring the SBCC to adopt rules is concerning. The SBCC has an overwhelming workload as it is, and to add to that the requirement to adopt rules for a limited amount of cities is worrisome. Instead, this bill should direct the DOH to adopt rules that authorize the optional use of greywater, rather than mandate it. Greywater reuse is a good option for those who want it, but it should not be a requirement because the cost is actually significant. This bill also requires more than just one tank. It will require two sets of pipes for plumbing, which is an additional cost. The additional \$5,000 added to the cost of a home to implement greywater reuse is a significant amount of money. Adding \$1,000 to the cost of a home means 418 families will not have a home. Although the argument is that there will be savings in water bills, the cost to implement greywater reuse still adds to a mortgage over the lifetime of the mortgage. Mandated environmental additions to homes do not always result in a payoff at resale; it depends on location.

(Other) It is important to consider adding the option of using reclaimed or recycled water in addition to greywater. Getting municipalities to expand use of reclaimed water is equally as beneficial in protecting water reserves.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Farrell, prime sponsor; Rachael King; Ian King; and Joe Daniels, Washington Association of Water and Sewer Districts.

(Opposed) Kjell Anderson, American Institute of Architects, Washington Council; and Jan Himebaugh, Building Industry Association of Washington.

(Other) Robin Zukoski, Coalition for Clean Water.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.