

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5162

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As Passed Senate, February 20, 2017

**Title:** An act relating to creating the wastewater treatment plant operator certification account.

**Brief Description:** Creating the wastewater treatment plant operator certification account.

**Sponsors:** Senators McCoy, Sheldon, Rolfes, Takko and Chase; by request of Department of Ecology.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Energy, Environment & Telecommunications: 1/31/17, 2/01/17 [DP].

**Floor Activity:**

Passed Senate: 2/20/17, 45-0.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Creates the Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator Certification account.
- Repeals the provision requiring fees received for the administration of the Wastewater Operator Certification program to be deposited into the state General Fund.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, ENVIRONMENT & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Ericksen, Chair; Sheldon, Vice Chair; Carlyle, Ranking Minority Member; Brown, Hobbs, Honeyford, Ranker, Short and Wellman.

**Staff:** Jan Odano (786-7486)

**Background:** The Department of Ecology (Ecology) implements the Wastewater Operator Certification program (program). To implement the program, Ecology is authorized to categorize wastewater treatment plants by size, type, and complexity to address the experience and skill level needed by a certified operator to protect the public health and the state's waters; determine qualifications and certification of operators for different classification of wastewater treatment plants; and to certify operators. A wastewater treatment plant must be operated by a certified operator.

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*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.*

There are five levels of wastewater certification in Washington. The certification levels range from an operator in training to Group IV. Each level of certification has education and experience requirements and requires the applicant to take and pass an exam. All certification levels require a high school diploma or GED, in addition to specific experience and college credit.

Ecology is required to collect fees for issuing and renewing certificates sufficient to cover the cost of the program. All fees received in the administration of the program are deposited into the state General Fund.

**Summary of Bill:** The Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator Certification account is created. The provision requiring fees received for the administration of the program be deposited into the state General Fund is repealed.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members:** No.

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: The fees collected for the program are deposited into the GF-S. However, funding through GF-S for the program have decreased such that the program costs are not covered. Certified operators are the first line of defense.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator John McCoy, Prime Sponsor; Donald Seeberger, Ecology.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** No one.