

**HB 1622 - DIGEST**

Authorizes the department of ecology to: (1) Issue a drought advisory when it appears that drought conditions may develop;

(2) Upon issuance of a drought emergency order, notify the public of the order;

(3) Issue grants to eligible public entities to reduce current or future hardship caused by drought conditions; and

(4) Develop and update a drought contingency plan in collaboration with other affected federal, state, and local governments.

Requires the department to initiate a pilot program to explore the cost, feasibility, and benefits of entering into long-term water right lease agreements.

Permits a person to petition the department to declare a drought emergency for the state or portions of the state.

Changes the name of the state drought preparedness account to the state drought preparedness and response account.

Permits expenditures from the account to be used for drought preparedness and response activities, including grants.