
SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1690

State of Washington

69th Legislature

2025 Regular Session

By House Local Government (originally sponsored by Representatives Wylie, Berry, Fosse, Hunt, Parshley, Fey, Doglio, Berg, Scott, Pollet, Nance, Stonier, and Duerr)

READ FIRST TIME 02/21/25.

1 AN ACT Relating to assessing the state's existing water and sewer
2 systems to identify data gaps, ensure clean water, ensure sufficient
3 waste disposal, protect public health, and protect the environment of
4 the state; adding a new section to chapter 43.21A RCW; and creating a
5 new section.

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

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that the lack of
8 comprehensive statewide information on the status of water and sewer
9 systems and the upgrades that are needed for these systems is of
10 critical environmental, public health, and economic consequence to
11 the state.

12 (2) The legislature notes the following conditions:

13 (a) Public works grants continue to be unable to accommodate
14 local governments' abilities to maintain, repair, and expand water
15 and sewer systems within the urban growth areas and densely populated
16 areas adjacent to the urban growth area.

17 (b) Reports by county health officials indicate an increasing
18 presence of human coliform in residential wells throughout the state.

19 (c) County governments face structural financial limits of
20 capacity and staffing to inspect and require maintenance of septic
21 systems and connect septic systems to new or existing sewer lines.

1 Some counties may not have current information on the number and
2 condition of septic systems and well water quality.

3 (d) Municipal governments have limited financial capacity to
4 accommodate existing and new businesses because of the lack of sewer
5 access and disposal in smaller communities, resulting in a lack of
6 economic development and employment opportunities.

7 (e) Programs within the capital budget are inadequate to meet
8 current and increasing needs.

9 (f) Housing development demand and, specifically, the need for
10 low-income housing are increasing, resulting in tiny house villages
11 and multifamily housing being built in mature neighborhoods with
12 aging water and sewer infrastructure, adding to the cost of such
13 housing.

14 (g) The addition of human waste to water flowing into lowland
15 lakes is adding to the problems of blue-green algae blooms, noxious
16 weed growth, and poor salmon habitat and potential habitat.

17 (h) Urban lake degradation has a detrimental impact on the
18 quality of life and economy of nearby communities. One example is
19 when world-class rowing competitions in Vancouver Lake need to be
20 canceled because of algae blooms.

21 (3) Therefore, it is the intent of the legislature to identify
22 gaps in current information, costs needed to fix existing systems,
23 and recommendations for how to ensure water and sewer infrastructure
24 needs are met to protect environmental resources, public health, and
25 communities across the state.

26 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 43.21A
27 RCW to read as follows:

28 (1) The department and the department of health must jointly
29 conduct and produce a comprehensive assessment of the current
30 maintenance and upgrade needs for water and sewer systems throughout
31 the state to prevent pollution, protect public health, and support
32 communities and the economy. The department and the department of
33 health may:

34 (a) Consult with and solicit data as necessary to obtain detailed
35 information on water and sewer facilities in the state from entities
36 including, but not limited to: Relevant state agencies, boards, and
37 commissions; cities; counties; local boards of health; public and
38 private water and sewer utilities; and conservation districts; and

1 (b) Review relevant projects to inform the development of a
2 successful needs assessment from other states such as the mid-county
3 sewer project conducted in Multnomah county.
4 (2) The needs assessment may include, but is not limited to:
5 (a) A list of water and sewer systems in the state that need
6 critical upgrades or maintenance;
7 (b) An analysis of the costs required to upgrade and maintain
8 such systems; and
9 (c) Options for program design and potential funding strategies.
10 (3) The department and the department of health must report to
11 the governor and the appropriate committees on the results of the
12 needs assessment by June 30, 2027.

--- END ---