

RCW 36.94.140 Authority of county to operate system—Rates and charges, fixing of—Factors to be considered—Assistance for low-income persons.

(1) Every county, in the operation of a system of sewerage and/or water, shall have full jurisdiction and authority to manage, regulate, and control it. Except as provided in subsection (3) of this section, every county shall have full jurisdiction and authority to fix, alter, regulate, and control the rates and charges for the service and facilities to those to whom such service and facilities are available, and to levy charges for connection to the system.

(2) The rates for availability of service and facilities, and connection charges so charged must be uniform for the same class of customers or service and facility. In classifying customers served, service furnished or made available by such system of sewerage and/or water, or the connection charges, the county legislative authority may consider any or all of the following factors:

(a) The difference in cost of service to the various customers within or without the area;

(b) The difference in cost of maintenance, operation, repair and replacement of the various parts of the systems;

(c) The different character of the service and facilities furnished various customers;

(d) The quantity and quality of the sewage and/or water delivered and the time of its delivery;

(e) Capital contributions made to the system or systems, including, but not limited to, assessments;

(f) The cost of acquiring the system or portions of the system in making system improvements necessary for the public health and safety;

(g) The public benefit nonprofit corporation status, as defined in RCW 24.03A.245, of the land user; and

(h) Any other matters which present a reasonable difference as a ground for distinction.

(3) The rate a county may charge under this section for storm or surface water sewer systems or the portion of the rate allocable to the storm or surface water sewer system of combined sanitary sewage and storm or surface water sewer systems shall be reduced by a minimum of ten percent for any new or remodeled commercial building that utilizes a permissive rainwater harvesting system. Rainwater harvesting systems shall be properly sized to utilize the available roof surface of the building. The jurisdiction shall consider rate reductions in excess of ten percent dependent upon the amount of rainwater harvested.

(4) A county may provide assistance to aid low-income persons in connection with services provided under this chapter.

(5) The service charges and rates shall produce revenues sufficient to take care of the costs of maintenance and operation, revenue bond and warrant interest and principal amortization requirements, and all other charges necessary for the efficient and proper operation of the system.

(6) A connection charge under this section for service to a manufactured housing community, as defined in RCW 59.20.030, applies to an individual lot within that community only if the system of water or sewerage provides and maintains the connection. [2021 c 176 s 5215; 2005 c 324 s 2; 2003 c 394 s 4; 1997 c 447 s 12; 1995 c 124 s 2; 1990 c 133 s 2; 1975 1st ex.s. c 188 s 2; 1967 c 72 s 14.]

Effective date—2021 c 176: See note following RCW 24.03A.005.

Finding—Purpose—1997 c 447: See note following RCW 70.05.074.

Findings—1990 c 133: "The legislature finds the best interests of the citizens of the state are served if:

(1) Customers served by public water systems are assured of an adequate quantity and quality of water supply at reasonable rates;

(2) There is improved coordination between state agencies engaged in water system planning and public health regulation and local governments responsible for land use regulation and public health and safety;

(3) Public water systems in violation of health and safety standards adopted under RCW 43.20.050 remain in operation and continue providing water service providing that public health is not compromised, assuming a suitable replacement purveyor is found and deficiencies are corrected in an expeditious manner consistent with public health and safety; and

(4) The state address[es], in a systematic and comprehensive fashion, new operating requirements which will be imposed on public water systems under the federal Safe Drinking Water Act." [1990 c 133 s 1.]

Severability—1990 c 133: "If any provision of this act or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected." [1990 c 133 s 12.]