

FINAL BILL REPORT

SSB 5504

C 456 L 09
Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Concerning reclaimed water permitting.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Environment, Water & Energy (originally sponsored by Senators Fraser, Honeyford, Rockefeller, Marr, Kline and Morton; by request of Department of Ecology).

Senate Committee on Environment, Water & Energy
House Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources

Background: Reclaimed water is wastewater treatment system effluent that has been treated in order to be suitable for a beneficial use or a controlled use that otherwise would not occur. Reclaimed water may be used for a variety of nonpotable water purposes including irrigation, agricultural uses, industrial and commercial uses, stream flow augmentation, dust control, fire suppression, surface percolation, and discharge into constructed wetlands.

The Department of Health (DOH) issues permits to water generators for commercial or industrial uses of reclaimed water. The Department of Ecology (DOE) issues reclaimed water permits for land applications of reclaimed water. DOH and DOE were required to adopt a single set of standards, procedures, and guidelines for industrial and commercial uses and land applications of reclaimed water. These standards were adopted in the mid-1990s, and resulted from consultation with an advisory committee of interested stakeholders.

In 2006 the Legislature required DOE to adopt rules for reclaimed water use, in coordination with DOH, and in consultation with the Rules Advisory Committee (RAC). The rules must address all aspects of reclaimed water use, including industrial uses, surface percolation, and stream flow augmentation. To this end, DOE and DOH, with the involvement of the RAC and several other task forces, have reviewed the current reclaimed water regulations and have suggested ways to make development of reclaimed water facilities easier and more efficient.

Summary: DOE and DOH will determine by rule which agency will act as the lead agency for purposes of the reclaimed water code. Both agencies have the authority to carry out the provisions of the reclaimed water code, including permitting and enforcement. The lead agency must refer all permit applications to the nonlead agency for review and consultation. DOE may use permit fees for administration of the reclaimed water system permits. All

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plans, reports, and proposed methods of operation and maintenance must be approved by the lead agency before construction may begin.

The lead agency must provide adequate public notice and opportunity for review and comment on all initial permit and renewal applications. The permitting decision is appealable in the manner established for the agency acting as the lead agency on that application.

The reclaimed water permit must include provisions that protect human health and the environment. The permit also must assure adequate and reliable treatment, and govern the water quality, location, rate, and purpose of use. A permit may only be issued to (1) a municipal, quasi-municipal, or governmental entity; (2) a private utility; (3) the holder of a waste disposal permit; (4) the owner of an agricultural processing facility that is generating agricultural industrial process water for agricultural use; or (5) the owner of an industrial facility that is generating industrial process water for reuse.

The lead agency has the right to enter and inspect any public or private property related to the reclaimed water permit in order to determine compliance with laws and rules. Violations of the reclaimed water code may include fines up to \$10,000 and the costs of prosecution, imprisonment in the county jail of not more than one year, or both. Each day of a willful violation of the reclaimed water code may be deemed a separate and additional violation. Penalties imposed by DOE go to the General Fund, whereas penalties imposed by DOH must be used to provide training and technical assistance to reclaimed water system owners and operators.

If the proposed use of reclaimed water is to augment or replace potable water supplies or to create the potential for the development of an additional new potable water supply, then regional water supply plans must consider the proposed use of the reclaimed water. The DOE must review comments from the Reclaimed Water Committee and Reclaimed Water and Water Rights Advisory Committee by November 30, 2009, and submit a recommendation to the Legislature on the impairment requirements and the standards for reclaimed water, as well as the positions of the stakeholders on those issues.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	45	1	
House	98	0	(House amended)
Senate	45	2	(Senate concurred)

Effective: July 26, 2009