

FINAL BILL REPORT

SSB 6634

C 84 L 10

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Establishing civil penalties for failure to comply with dairy nutrient management recordkeeping requirements.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Agriculture & Rural Economic Development (originally sponsored by Senators Ranker, Hatfield, Morton, Haugen, Becker, Shin and Jacobsen).

Senate Committee on Agriculture & Rural Economic Development
House Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources

Background: In 1998 when the Dairy Nutrient Management Act was enacted, the list of violations included:

1. discharges of pollutants to waters of the state;
2. failure to register the dairy operation;
3. lack of an approved dairy nutrient management plan by July 1, 2002; and
4. lack of certification that the plan was fully implemented by December 31, 2003.

Authority to impose fines is established for each of these violations. The failure to prepare or implement a plan was subject to \$100 per month fine up to a combined total of \$5,000. Discharge of pollutants is subject to a maximum fine of \$10,000 per day. A civil penalty schedule serves as a guide to determine the amount of the fine when a discharge occurs.

In 2009 the Legislature enacted SSB 5677. The failure to keep necessary records to show applications within acceptable agronomic rates was made a violation of the Dairy Nutrient Management Act. The purpose of this requirement was to better assure ground waters are protected from the potential of being polluted by over-application of nutrients.

After the legislation was enacted, it was determined that if no actual discharge to waters of the state could be shown, that the civil penalty authority for discharges did not apply. Thus, there was no penalty for failure to keep the required nutrient application records.

In 1995 and 1996 legislation was enacted that addressed how fines should be handled for violations that were detected on technical assistance visits conducted by regulatory agencies. Additionally, this legislation, now contained in chapter 43.05 RCW, limited the ability of enumerated state agencies, including the Department of Agriculture (DOA), to impose civil penalties without first issuing a notice of correction if there was minor impact to the environment or damage to property.

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.

Summary: DOA may impose a civil penalty on a dairy producer up to \$5,000 for failure to comply with nutrient management record keeping requirements. The aggregate penalty is not to exceed \$5,000 in a calendar year.

In determining the amount of the civil penalty, DOA is to take into consideration the following:

1. the gravity and magnitude of the violation;
2. whether the violation is repeated or is continuous;
3. whether the violation was an unavoidable accident, negligence, or intentional;
4. the violator's efforts to correct the violation; and
5. the immediacy and extent to which the violation threatens the public health or safety or harms the environment.

Authority is provided to DOA to establish by rule a graduated civil penalty schedule that includes the factors listed in this section.

Persons may appeal a civil penalty to the Pollution Control Hearings Board.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	43	4
House	86	10

Effective: June 10, 2010
June 30, 2019 (Section 3)