

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESB 6635

As Passed House:
February 28, 1996

Title: An act relating to application fees for mines used primarily for public works projects in counties with 1993 populations of less than twenty thousand.

Brief Description: Concerning application permits for small public works projects mines.

Sponsors: Senators Morton and Drew.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Natural Resources: 2/23/96 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/28/96, 96-0.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Fuhrman, Chairman; Buck, Vice Chairman; Pennington, Vice Chairman; Basich, Ranking Minority Member; Regala, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Beeksma; Elliot; Hatfield; Keiser; Sheldon; Stevens; B. Thomas and L. Thomas.

Staff: Linda Byers (786-7129).

Background: Surface mine permit holders pay an annual surface mining permit fee. The regular permit fee is \$650. A special provision in current law applies to small county mines in use exclusively for public works projects. Annual fees for a county for these small mines may not exceed \$1,000.

The Department of Natural Resources has adopted a rule which implements the fee schedule for the small county public works mines. For mines larger than seven acres, counties pay the regular \$650 annual fee whether or not the surface mine is active. For mines that are less than or equal to seven acres in size that are used exclusively for public works projects and from which the county plans to extract minerals during the next calendar year, counties pay \$650 for one such mine and \$1,000 for two or more such mines.

Summary of Bill: With regard to the surface mining permit fees for small mines for all counties, current law is amended to specify that the annual permit fees paid by a county for mines used exclusively for public works projects and having less than seven acres of disturbed area per mine will not exceed \$1,000.

A new permit fee waiver is provided for counties with 1993 populations of less than 20,000 persons. Annual permit fees are waived for all county mines used primarily for public works projects in counties meeting the population requirement, regardless of the size of the mines. Twelve counties had 1993 populations of less than 20,000 persons (Adams, Asotin, Columbia, Ferry, Garfield, Klickitat, Lincoln, Pacific, Pend Oreille, San Juan, Skamania, and Wahkiakum).

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: This bill is designed for smaller counties who bear high expenses for their gravel pits and maintaining their roads. This is significant legislation for smaller counties and will provide some relief from fees. If this bill does not pass, Lincoln County will not be able to permit all of its sites. This will increase haul time and distance on most of our operations, as well as increase the costs of road maintenance.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Senator Bob Morton, prime sponsor; and Commissioner Ted Hopkins, Lincoln County (both in favor).