

FINAL BILL REPORT

HB 2716

C 322 L 96

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Concerning waste discharge permits.

Sponsors: Representatives Chandler and Chappell.

House Committee on Agriculture & Ecology

Senate Committee on Ecology & Parks

Background: Wastewater Discharge Permits. Any person who conducts a commercial or industrial operation which results in the disposal of waste into the waters of the state is required to obtain a wastewater discharge permit from the Department of Ecology. The permit generally specifies the type, quantity, and concentration of pollutants that may be discharged. The permit is valid for up to five years.

The State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). SEPA is a process intended to identify whether or not a proposed project has probable significant adverse environmental impacts. SEPA applies when a state or local governmental agency undertakes a development or issues a permit for a development. If impacts are probable, an environmental impact statement must be completed.

The SEPA rules, adopted by the Department of Ecology, provide a categorical exemption for the issuance, reissuance, or modification of a waste discharge permit that contains conditions no less stringent than federal effluent limitations and state rules. The exemption does not apply to new source discharges. The Department of Ecology's use of the categorical exemption on wastewater discharge permits issued to Washington pulp and paper mills is currently being challenged in court.

Summary: A statutory exemption from SEPA is created for the issuance, reissuance, or modification of a waste discharge permit that contains conditions no less stringent than federal effluent limitations and state rules. The exemption applies to existing discharges only.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	96	1	
Senate	32	16	(Senate amended)
House			(House refused to concur)
Senate	32	14	(Senate receded)

Effective: June 6, 1996