

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 2378

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Ecology & Parks, February 23, 1996

Title: An act relating to reclaimed water.

Brief Description: Revising regulations concerning reclaimed water.

Sponsors: House Committee on Agriculture & Ecology (originally sponsored by Representatives Chandler, Mastin, Schoesler, Dyer, Elliot, Johnson, B. Thomas, Thompson and Mulliken).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Ecology & Parks: 2/21/96, 2/23/96 [DPA].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ECOLOGY & PARKS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Fraser, Chair; Fairley, Vice Chair; Hochstatter, McAuliffe, Spanel and Swecker.

Staff: Kari Guy (786-7437)

Background: The Legislature enacted SSB 5606 during the 1995 session to encourage the use of reclaimed water. Reclaimed water is defined as effluent derived in any part from sewage from a wastewater treatment system that has been adequately and reliably treated, so that as a result of that treatment it is suitable for a direct beneficial use or a controlled use that would not otherwise occur.

Reclaimed water was specifically authorized to be used for surface spreading if the reclaimed water meets the criteria for ground water recharge, is incorporated into a sewer or water comprehensive plan, and is approved by the Department of Ecology or the Department of Health. There is no authority for the Department of Ecology to authorize the use of reclaimed water that does not meet the ground water recharge criteria for surface spreading.

The use of reclaimed water was also specifically authorized for discharge into created wetlands so long as the water meets class A reclaimed water standards, the discharge is incorporated into a sewer or water comprehensive plan, and is approved by the Department of Health or the Department of Ecology. Reclaimed water that does not meet class A reclaimed water standards may be discharged into created wetlands when specifically authorized by the Department of Ecology in conjunction with a pilot project to test the use of created wetlands for advanced treatment.

Summary of Amended Bill: The term "surface spreading" is changed to "surface percolation." References to "direct beneficial use" are changed to "beneficial use."

Reclaimed water may be discharged into created wetlands if the water meets the class A or B reclaimed water standards. Reclaimed water that does not meet the class A or B reclaimed water standards may be discharged into created wetlands when specifically authorized by the Department of Ecology in consultation with the Department of Health. The requirement that a discharge of reclaimed water under lower standards must be in conjunction with a pilot program is deleted.

When plans are submitted to the Department of Ecology for the construction of new sewerage systems, sewage treatment or disposal systems, or improvements to those systems, they must include consideration of opportunities for using reclaimed water.

The Department of Health and the Department of Ecology must report on the progress of implementing the reclaimed water laws to the House Agriculture and Ecology Committee and the Senate Ecology and Parks Committee by December 15, 1996.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill: A section is deleted that would have allowed reclaimed water that does not meet the ground water recharge criteria to be used for surface percolation if authorized by the Department of Ecology.

The definition of "reclaimed water" is amended to reference the reclamation criteria. Changes to the definition of "created wetlands" are deleted.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: None.

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

Testimony For: This bill includes technical corrections to address problems in the reclaimed water legislation passed last session.

Testimony Against: The ground water recharge criteria have not been developed yet. It is too soon to consider waivers to these standards.

Testified: Representative Chandler, prime sponsor; Pat Sumption, Friends of the Green (con).