

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 2449

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

Title: An act relating to water resource management.

Brief Description: Providing for water resource management.

Sponsors: House Committee on Agriculture & Ecology (originally sponsored by Representatives Delvin, Foreman, Chandler, Mastin, Honeyford, Clements, Koster, Boldt, Schoesler, Robertson, Silver, Mulliken and Johnson).

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: Gary Wilburn (786-7453)

Background: The right to use water for a beneficial purpose remains appurtenant to the land or place upon which it is used. The right to use this water may be transferred to another without loss of priority of right, with the approval of the Department of Ecology.

Summary of Amended Bill: An eight-member Joint Select Committee on Water Resources is created and is composed of two members from each political party caucus in both houses. A Senator and a member of the House are elected by the committee membership to serve as co-chairs. The committee receives staff support from both the Senate and the House of Representatives.

The committee must study the water resource subjects of water transfers, hydraulic continuity, and water rights relinquishment. A preliminary report and recommendations and a work plan for 1997 must be submitted to the 1997 Legislature. The work plan is to place a priority upon addressing water transfers. A final report and recommendations for legislation is to be submitted by December 31, 1997.

The bill is null and void if \$30,000 or more is not provided by June 30, 1996 in the omnibus appropriations act.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill: The amendment adds the subjects of hydraulic continuity and relinquishment to the study. The amendment extends the study time frame one year, with a preliminary report at the end of 1996. The null and void provision is added by the amendment.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 29, 1996.

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

Testimony For: Water resource transfers are an important means of meeting new water demand, but there is a need for a high level study of all aspects and impacts of transfers, and to develop the guidelines and criteria for transfers to occur.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative Delvin, prime sponsor; Representative Chandler (pro); Enid Layes, WA State Horticultural Assn. (pro); Pat Sumption, Friends of the Green (pro); Jerry Harper, Darryll Olsen, Columbia Snake River Irrigators Assn. (pro).