

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6370

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Energy, Telecommunications & Utilities, February 1, 1996

Title: An act relating to defining public water system.

Brief Description: Defining public water system.

Sponsors: Senators Roach, Morton and A. Anderson.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Energy, Telecommunications & Utilities: 1/24/96, 2/1/96 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, TELECOMMUNICATIONS & UTILITIES

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6370 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Sutherland, Chair; Loveland, Vice Chair; Finkbeiner, Hochstatter and Owen.

Staff: Susan Ridgley (786-7444)

Background: There are three places in the public health and safety statute that contain a definition of "public water system." There is a regulatory definition, and this contains two exemptions: one single-family residence; and systems with four or fewer connections, all of which serve residences on the same farm. Systems with 2-14 connections are managed under Group "B" requirements by local county regulation.

The statute concerning the certification of operators contains identical language to the regulatory definition.

The statute pertaining to the planning and coordination of water systems contains slightly different language. There is a grandfather exemption for owner-operated systems which (a) serve less than ten single-family residences or only one industrial plant, and (b) were in existence in before 1977. Other than this one additional exemption, the remaining language is substantially equivalent to the regulatory definition.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The regulatory definition of public water system is changed to allow an additional exemption for systems with four or fewer connections, at the discretion of the local legislative body. The operator certification statute and the statute dealing with planning and coordination of water systems are amended to conform to the language of the regulatory definition.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The original bill simply exempted water supply systems serving two single-family residences.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: This would help homeowners who want to add another home on to their existing well (e.g. "a granny unit"), without dealing with the more complex regulations for two-party connections. This is a form of taxation, and unnecessarily burdens private property. Homeowners will still test their wells for contamination, even if unregulated, because it is in their own best interest.

Testimony Against: This exemption shouldn't be mandated, but left to the discretion of the local health department. Some counties chose to waive requirements for two-parties, but others don't.

Testified: Al Hawkins, Roger Lemon, Small Class B Well Owners Assn. (pro); Dave Clark, DOH (con); Ken Blahot, citizen (pro).