

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1817

As Reported By House Committee On:
Agriculture & Ecology

Title: An act relating to a reclaimed water demonstration program.

Brief Description: Authorizing reclaimed water demonstration projects.

Sponsors: Representatives Chandler, Kessler, Alexander, Linville, DeBolt, O'Brien, Skinner, Wolfe, McMorris, Ogden, D. Sommers, Hankins, Cooke and Mason.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Agriculture & Ecology: 2/17/97, 2/24/97 [DPS].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & ECOLOGY

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Chandler, Chairman; Parlette, Vice Chairman; Schoesler, Vice Chairman; Linville, Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Cooper; Delvin; Koster; Mastin; Regala and Sump.

Staff: Bill Lynch (786-7092).

Background: The Legislature has adopted legislation to encourage the use of reclaimed water. Reclaimed water can be used in many instances instead of water that is otherwise suitable for drinking purposes. It is suggested that by funding demonstration projects that are varied in nature, it will help provide the experience necessary to refine the technologies so that reclaimed water can be used in a more cost-effective manner.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The Department of Ecology is directed to establish and administer a reclaimed water demonstration program in cooperation with the Department of Health. The demonstration program consists of five demonstration projects.

The Department of Ecology must enter into a grant agreement with each of the demonstration project jurisdictions by September 30, 1997. The agreement must include reporting requirements, time-lines, and a fund disbursement schedule based

upon agreed project milestones. The Department of Ecology must report to the appropriate legislative committees on the results of the program upon completion of the projects.

Pilot projects that discharge or deliver reclaimed water into federal reclamation projects or ands must meet federal Bureau of Reclamation requirements for such discharges or deliveries. No irrigation district is liable for any damages to persons or property arising from the demonstration projects.

The five reclaimed water demonstration projects are:

- (1) City of Ephrata will use Class A reclaimed water for surface spreading to recharge the groundwater and reduce the nitrate concentrations that exceed standards for drinking water;
- (2) Lincoln County will study using reclaimed water to transport 22 million gallons a day from Spokane to sources that will put water back into long depleted streambeds, and the water will eventually become part of the Columbia basin project water;
- (3) Royal City will replace an interim emergency sprayfield by using 100 percent of its discharge as Class A reclaimed water to augment summer irrigation and enhance local wetlands and lakes in the winter;
- (4) The city of Sequim will implement a tertiary treatment system and reuse 100 percent of its wastewater to reopen an existing shellfish closure area, improve streamflows into the Dungeness River, and provide a sustainable water supply for irrigation; and
- (5) The city of Yelm will use 100 percent of its wastewater to provide alternative water supply for irrigation and industrial use to offset increased demands for water, protect Nisqually River chum salmon runs, and develop experimental artificial wetlands to test low cost treatment options.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: Language is added to hold irrigation districts harmless from discharges from pilot projects. Discharges must meet federal standards in federal reclamation projects.

Appropriation: The sum of \$10 million is appropriated to the Department of Ecology for the demonstration projects. The sum of \$150 thousand is appropriated to the department to monitor the progress of the projects and further refine the standards.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: These projects have had lots of citizen involvement. These projects are technically feasible. Small communities have committed scarce resources to make these work as long-term solutions to their problems. The projects will help attract industry in areas where the population is growing, will help in-stream flows for salmon runs, improve recreation opportunities, and allow for additional irrigation. These projects will help in the development of criteria for reclaimed water. West Medical Lake should be added as a pilot project.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative Gary Alexander, prime sponsor (pro); Representative Lynn Kessler, prime sponsor (pro); Kathleen Collins, Association of Washington cities (pro); Bob Smith, city of Sequim (pro); Mike Konen, city of Royal City (pro); Bill Graedel, Lincoln County (pro); Dianne Recknagle, city of Ephrata (pro); Kathy Wolf, city of Yelm (pro); D.C. Terry Harland, city of Medical Lake (pro); Pete Rose, city of Medical Lake (pro); Dr. Larry Esvelt, city of Medical Lake (pro); Sandy Mackie (pro); and Mike Schwisow, Washington State Water Resource Association (pro w/concerns (original bill)).