
SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1118

State of Washington

55th Legislature

1997 Regular Session

By House Committee on Agriculture & Ecology (originally sponsored by Representatives Mastin, Chandler, Johnson, Boldt and Honeyford)

Read first time 02/13/97.

1 AN ACT Relating to water rights claims; amending RCW 90.14.041 and
2 90.14.071; and adding new sections to chapter 90.14 RCW.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 90.14 RCW
5 to read as follows:

6 (1) A new period for filing statements of claim for water rights is
7 established. The filing period shall begin September 1, 1997, and
8 shall end at midnight June 30, 1998. Each person or entity claiming
9 under state law a right to withdraw or divert and beneficially use
10 surface water under a right that was established before the effective
11 date of water code established by chapter 117, Laws of 1917, and any
12 person claiming under state law a right to withdraw and beneficially
13 use ground water under a right that was established before the
14 effective date of the ground water code established by chapter 263,
15 Laws of 1945, shall register the claim with the department during the
16 filing period unless the claim has been filed in the state water rights
17 claims registry before the effective date of this section. A person
18 who claims such a right and fails to register the claim as required is
19 conclusively deemed to have waived and relinquished any right, title,

1 or interest in the right. A statement filed during this filing period
2 shall be filed as provided in RCW 90.14.051 and 90.14.061 and shall be
3 subject to the provisions of this chapter regarding statements of
4 claim. This reopening of the period for filing statements of claim
5 shall not affect or impair in any respect whatsoever any water right
6 existing prior to the effective date of this section. A water right
7 embodied in a statement of claim filed under this section is
8 subordinate to any water right embodied in a permit or certificate
9 issued under chapter 90.03 or 90.44 RCW prior to the date the statement
10 of claim is filed with the department and is subordinate to any water
11 right embodied in a statement of claim filed in the water rights claims
12 registry before the effective date of this section.

13 (2) The department of ecology shall, at least once each week during
14 the month of August 1997 and at least once each month during the filing
15 period, publish a notice regarding this new filing period in newspapers
16 of general circulation in the various regions of the state. The notice
17 shall contain the substance of the following notice:

18 WATER RIGHTS NOTICE

19 Each person or entity claiming a right to withdraw or divert
20 and beneficially use surface water under a right that was
21 established before June 7, 1917, or claiming a right to
22 withdraw and beneficially use ground water under a right that
23 was established before June 7, 1945, under the laws of the
24 state of Washington must register the claim with the department
25 of ecology, Olympia, Washington. The claim must be registered
26 on or after September 1, 1997, and not later than five o'clock
27 on June 30, 1998.

28 FAILURE TO REGISTER THE CLAIM WILL RESULT IN A
29 WAIVER AND RELINQUISHMENT OF THE WATER RIGHT OR
30 CLAIMED WATER RIGHT

31 Registering a claim is NOT required for:

- 32 1. A water right that is based on the authority of a permit or
33 certificate issued by the department of ecology or one of its
34 predecessors;
- 35 2. A water right that is based on the exemption from permitting
36 requirements provided by RCW 90.44.050 for certain very limited
37 uses of ground water; or

1 3. A water right that is based on a statement of claim that has
2 previously been filed in the state's water rights claims registry
3 during other registration periods.

4 For further information, for a copy of the law establishing this
5 filing period, and for an explanation of the law and its
6 requirements, contact the department of ecology, Olympia,
7 Washington.

8 The department shall also prepare, make available to the public,
9 and distribute to the communications media information describing the
10 types of rights for which statements of claim need not be filed, the
11 effect of filing, the effect of RCW 90.14.071, and other information
12 relevant to filings and statements of claim.

13 (3) The department of ecology shall ensure that employees of the
14 department are readily available to respond to inquiries regarding
15 filing statements of claim and that all of the information the
16 department has at its disposal that is relevant to an inquiry regarding
17 a particular potential claim, including information regarding other
18 rights and claims in the vicinity of the potentially claimed right, is
19 available to the person making the inquiry. The department shall
20 dedicate additional staff in each of the department's regional offices
21 and in the department's central office to ensure that responses and
22 information are provided in a timely manner during each of the business
23 days during the month of August 1997 and during the new filing period.

24 (4) To assist the department in avoiding unnecessary duplication,
25 the department shall provide to a requestor, within ten working days of
26 receiving the request, the records of any water right claimed, listed,
27 recorded, or otherwise existing in the records of the department or its
28 predecessor agencies, including any report of a referee in a water
29 rights adjudication. This information shall be provided as required by
30 this subsection if the request is provided in writing from the owner of
31 the water right or from the holder of a possessory interest in any real
32 property for water right records associated with the property or if the
33 requestor is an attorney for such an owner. The information regarding
34 water rights in the area served by a regional office of the department
35 shall also be provided within ten working days to any requestor who
36 requests to review the information in person in the department's
37 regional office. The information held by the headquarters office of
38 the department shall also be provided within ten working days to any

1 requestor who requests to review the information in person in the
2 department's headquarters office. The requirements of this subsection
3 that records and information be provided to requestors within ten
4 working days may not be construed as limiting in any manner the
5 obligations of the department to provide public access to public
6 records as required by chapter 42.17 RCW.

7 (5) This section does not apply to claims for the use of ground
8 water withdrawn in an area that is, during the period established by
9 subsection (2) of this section, the subject of a general adjudication
10 proceeding for water rights in superior court under RCW 90.03.110
11 through 90.03.245 and the proceeding applies to ground water rights.
12 This section does not apply to claims for the use of surface water
13 withdrawn in an area that is, during the period established by
14 subsection (2) of this section, the subject of a general adjudication
15 proceeding for water rights in superior court under RCW 90.03.110
16 through 90.03.245 and the proceeding applies to surface water rights.

17 (6) This section does not apply to claims for the use of water in
18 a ground water area or subarea for which a management program adopted
19 by the department by rule and in effect on the effective date of this
20 section establishes acreage expansion limitations for the use of ground
21 water.

22 **Sec. 2.** RCW 90.14.041 and 1988 c 127 s 73 are each amended to read
23 as follows:

24 All persons using or claiming the right to withdraw or divert and
25 make beneficial use of public surface or ground waters of the state,
26 except as (~~hereinafter~~) provided in this section, RCW 90.14.043, and
27 section 1 of this act, shall file with the department of ecology not
28 later than June 30, 1974, a statement of claim for each water right
29 asserted on a form provided by the department. Neither this section
30 (~~shall not~~) nor section 1 of this act apply to any water rights which
31 are based on the authority of a permit or certificate issued by the
32 department of ecology or one of its predecessors. Further, section 1
33 of this act does not apply to the beneficial uses of water which are
34 the subject of statements of claim in the water rights claims registry
35 prior to September 1, 1997, or which are exempted from permit and
36 application requirements by RCW 90.44.050 and neither this section nor
37 section 1 of this act requires that statements of claims for such uses
38 be filed during the filing period established by section 1 of this act.

1 **Sec. 3.** RCW 90.14.071 and 1969 ex.s. c 284 s 16 are each amended
2 to read as follows:

3 Except as provided in section 5 of this act or as exempted from
4 filing by RCW 90.14.041, any person claiming the right to divert or
5 withdraw waters of the state as set forth in RCW 90.14.041, who fails
6 to file a statement of claim as provided in RCW 90.14.041, 90.14.043,
7 or section 1 of this act and in RCW 90.14.051 and 90.14.061, shall be
8 conclusively deemed to have waived and relinquished any right, title,
9 or interest in said right.

10 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** A new section is added to chapter 90.14 RCW
11 to read as follows:

12 Any person or entity, or successor to such person or entity, having
13 a statement of claim on file with the water rights claims registry on
14 the effective date of this section, may submit to the department of
15 ecology for filing an amendment to such a statement of claim as
16 provided in this section. Such an amendment may be submitted only to
17 correct an error in the statement filed and the person submitting the
18 amendment shall attest in writing that the amendment does not
19 constitute an expansion of the right for which the statement of claim
20 was intended. Such an amendment may be submitted only during the
21 period established in section 1 of this act for filing statements of
22 claim.

23 The department shall accept any such submission and file the
24 amendment in the registry unless the department by written
25 determination concludes that the requirements of this section have not
26 been satisfied. Any person aggrieved by a determination of the
27 department may obtain a review thereof by filing a petition for review
28 with the pollution control hearings board within thirty days of the
29 date of the determination by the department. The provisions of RCW
30 90.14.081 shall apply to any amendment filed under this section. This
31 section shall not be construed as limiting the authority of a person or
32 entity to submit an amendment under RCW 90.14.065.

33 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** A new section is added to chapter 90.14 RCW
34 to read as follows:

35 During the period beginning March 1, 1994, and ending at midnight
36 June 30, 1998, neither the department of ecology nor the pollution
37 control hearings board may determine or find that a water right has

1 been waived or relinquished under this chapter based on the failure of
2 any person or entity to file a statement of claim for the right under
3 this chapter. Any finding or determination issued contrary to this
4 section is void. If the department or the board determined that a
5 person waived or relinquished a water right during the time period
6 specified in this section, but prior to the effective date of this
7 section, the sole remedy for the person shall be to file a new claim or
8 submit an amendment under section 1 or 4 of this act or RCW 90.14.065.

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