

House Bill Analysis

HB 2736

HOUSE AGRICULTURE AND ECOLOGY COMMITTEE

January 28, 2000

- Creates a Task Force on Water Storage to examine the role of increased water storage in providing water supplies and flood control and to examine means of providing funding for the storage.
- Requires the Task Force to report to the Legislature by December 31, 2000.
- Appropriates \$150,000 to the Department of Ecology for the purposes of the study.

BACKGROUND:

The Water Resources Act lists fundamental principles that are to guide the utilization and management of the waters of the state. Added to this list in 1997 is the following fundamental: The development of multipurpose water storage facilities shall be a high priority for programs of water allocation, planning, management, and efficiency. . . .- (RCW 90.54.020(4).) The Act directs the Department of Ecology (DOE) and others to evaluate the potential for the development of new storage projects and the benefits and effects of storage for a variety of purposes. (RCW 90.54.020(4).)

Consistent with the list of fundamentals, state and local governments and other entities are encouraged, by provisions of the Act added in 1989, to carry out water use efficiency and conservation programs and practices. (RCW 90.54.180.) These 1989 amendments specify that the benefits of storage for a variety of purposes are to be fully considered in determining the cost-effectiveness of alternative water sources. (RCW 90.54.180(3).)

Legislation enacted in 1997 directs the DOE to provide, upon request, assistance to an applicant for a water right in obtaining or developing an adequate and appropriate supply of water in certain instances. (RCW 43.21A.064(5).) In that legislation, the Legislature stated that (p)roviding this assistance for public water supply systems can be accomplished through assistance in the creation of municipal interties and transfers, additional storage

capabilities, enhanced conservation efforts, and added efficiency standards for using existing supplies.– (Section 1, Chapter 443, Laws of 1997.)

Watershed planning conducted under Chapter 90.82 RCW (created by 2SHB 2054 in 1997 and ESHB 2514 in 1998) must address water quantity in the watershed. It must also assess water supply and use and develop strategies for future use. These strategies may include additional water storage and water storage enhancements. (RCW 90.82.070.)

SUMMARY

A Task Force on Water Storage is created to examine the role of increased water storage in providing water supplies and flood control and to examine means of providing funding for the storage. It is composed of:

- a representative of each of the following departments, appointed by the heads of the departments: agriculture; community, trade, and economic development; ecology; fish and wildlife; and health;
- a representative of the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office, appointed by the Governor;
- representative of conservation districts, appointed by the Washington Association of Conservation Districts;
- two representatives of irrigation districts, appointed by the state's association of irrigation districts;
- two representatives of cities, appointed by the Association of Washington Cities.
- two representatives of counties, appointed by the Washington State Association of Counties.
- a representative of a municipal water purveyor that is not a division or other part of city government, appointed by the Secretary of Health from lists of nominees submitted by state-wide associations of such purveyors;
- four members of the House of Representatives, two from each of the major caucuses, appointed by the Co-Speakers; and
- four members of the Senate, two from each of the major caucuses, appointed by the President of the Senate.

One of the irrigation district members must represent a district within a federal reclamation project and one, a district that is outside of such a project. One of the city members and one of the county members must represent jurisdictions in western Washington and one of the city members and one of the county members must represent jurisdictions in eastern Washington. One of the city members and one of the county members must represent jurisdictions with relatively large populations and one of the city members and one of the county members must represent jurisdictions with relatively small populations.

Staff support for the Task Force is provided by the DOE and the Director of Ecology must convene the first meeting of the Task Force. The first meeting is to be held not less than 30 days after the effective date of the bill.

No member of the Task Force may receive compensation, per diem, or reimbursement of expenses from the Task Force or the DOE for his or her activities as a member of the Task Force, but may receive such payments as are authorized by the entity he or she is employed by, is appointed from, or represents.

The Task Force is to report its recommendations to the appropriate committees of the Legislature by December 31, 2000.

Appropriation: \$150,000 is appropriated from the General Fund to the DOE for the biennium ending June 30, 2001, for the purposes of this study.