

6872-S

Sponsor(s): Senate Committee on Environmental Quality & Water Resources (originally sponsored by Senators Fraser, Jacobsen and Swecker)

Brief Description: Expediting the processing of pending applications relating to existing water rights.

SB 6872-S - DIGEST

(DIGEST OF PROPOSED 1ST SUBSTITUTE)

Finds that the size of the current backlog of applications relating to existing water rights should be reduced.

Declares an intent to allow pending applications relating to existing water rights to be processed independently of pending applications for new water rights and without regard to possible impairment of pending applications for new water rights.

Declares an intent that timely processing of all water rights applications for the same source of supply in the order in which they were filed should occur to the extent allowed by funding appropriated to the department of ecology.

Requires the department to report to the legislature in July and January of each year regarding the numbers, types, and locations of applications for water rights processed during the preceding six months. The report submitted each July shall also address applications to be processed during the ensuing year. Provides that the report shall include applications filed under chapter 90.80 RCW, shall note applications with priority processing and the basis for priority, and shall note applications relating to water rights issued under chapter 90.66 RCW.

Creates the existing water rights account in the state treasury. Moneys may be placed in the account from legislative appropriations and transfers, federal appropriations, or any other lawful source. Moneys in the account may be spent only after appropriation. Expenditures from the account may be used solely to process and render decisions on applications relating to existing water rights filed under chapters 90.03 and 90.44 RCW, where the applications with sufficient information for processing within the same source of supply are processed in the order in which the applications were filed.

Makes an appropriation of 1.1 million dollars, or as much thereof as may be necessary, from the general fund to the existing water rights account for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2001, to carry out the purposes of this act.

Expires February 1, 2003.