

HOUSE BILL REPORT

EHB 1845

As Passed House:

April 9, 2001

Title: An act relating to surface mining reclamation permit fees.

Brief Description: Increasing the fee for a surface mining reclamation permit.

Sponsors: By Representatives Sehlin and H. Sommers; by request of Department of Natural Resources.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Appropriations: 2/21/01, 3/7/01 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 4/9/01, 87-7.

Brief Summary of Engrossed Bill

- Increases the surface mining permit fee from \$650 to \$1,000 and makes the fee non-refundable.
- Requires the Department of Natural Resources to report to the Legislature on program deliverables and uses of the new fee revenue.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 27 members: Representatives Sehlin, Republican Co-Chair; H. Sommers, Democratic Co-Chair; Barlean, Republican Vice Chair; Doumit, Democratic Vice Chair; Alexander, Buck, Clements, Cody, Dunshee, Fromhold, Gombosky, Grant, Kagi, Keiser, Kenney, Kessler, Lambert, Linville, Mastin, McIntire, Pearson, Pflug, Ruderman, D. Schmidt, Schual-Berke, Talcott and Tokuda.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 4 members: Representatives Lisk, Republican Vice Chair; Boldt, Cox and Mulliken.

Staff: Jeff Olsen (786-7157).

Background:

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) regulates and monitors surface mines. The Surface Mine Reclamation Program is primarily funded by a \$650 application fee paid to the department by persons applying for a surface mining permit. Permit fee revenues are deposited into the Surface Mining Reclamation Account to support the program.

Summary of Engrossed Bill:

The reclamation permit fee is increased from \$650 to \$1,000 and the fee is non-refundable.

The department must advise permit applicants of any information needed to complete the application within 60 days. The DNR is required to report to the Legislature on program deliverables and uses of the new fee revenue.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect on July 1, 2001.

Testimony For: The DNR's Surface Mining Permit Program is experiencing many challenging environmental requirements. Review of environmental impact statements and compliance with the federal Endangered Species Act takes time. There is a need for technical assistance to return lands to productive use. In addition, without a fee increase the program will experience a 30 percent reduction in staff. The aggregate industry agrees with the department and supports the fee increase. As consumption increases, industry needs a strong management program at the DNR for mine reclamation and enforcement.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Ron Teissere, Department of Natural Resources; Bruce Chattin, Washington Aggregate and Concrete Association; Steve Gano, Glacier Northwest; Scott Hazlegrove, Cadman; and Willy O'Neil, Associated General Contractors.