

5957-S2

Sponsor(s): Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Hargrove, Rasmussen, Morton, Swecker, Doumit, Sheahan, Oke and Brandland)

Brief Description: Establishing a system of standards and procedures concerning water quality data.

SB 5957-S2.E - DIGEST

(DIGEST AS PASSED LEGISLATURE)

Finds that: (1) The proper collection and review of credible water quality data is necessary to ensure compliance with the requirements of the federal clean water act (33 U.S.C. Sec. 1251 et seq.);

(2) The state needs to assemble and evaluate all existing and readily available water quality-related data and information from sources other than the state water quality agency, such as federal agencies, tribes, universities, and volunteer monitoring groups, if the data meets the state's requirements for data quality; and

(3) Developing and implementing water quality protection measures based on credible water quality data ensures that the financial resources of state and local governments and regulated entities are prioritized to address our state's most important water quality issues.

Declares an intent to ensure that credible water quality data is used as the basis for the assessment of the status of a water body relative to the surface water quality standards.

Declares an intent that a water body in which pollutant loadings from naturally occurring conditions are the sole cause of a violation of applicable surface water quality standards not be listed as impaired.

Declares that the department, the United States environmental protection agency, and the Indian tribes in Washington state have developed a voluntary agreement relating to the cooperative management of the clean water act section 303(d) program. The department shall consider water quality data that has been collected by Indian tribes under a quality assurance project plan that has been approved by the United States environmental protection agency if that data meets the objectives of the plan.

Provides that any person who knowingly falsifies data is guilty of a gross misdemeanor.

Provides that, by January 31, 2005, the department of ecology shall report to the appropriate committees of the senate and the house of representatives the status of activities undertaken to comply with the provisions of this act, and shall report by January 2006 any rule making required to implement this act including changes in listings resulting from the use of credible data.