

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 2061

---

**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
Environment

**Title:** An act relating to authorizing county legislative authorities to approve certain group B water systems based upon their delivery of water meeting safe drinking water standards.

**Brief Description:** Authorizing county legislative authorities to approve certain group B water systems based upon their delivery of water meeting safe drinking water standards.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Short and Kretz.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Environment: 2/16/15, 2/19/15 [DPS], 1/19/16 [DP2S].

**Brief Summary of Second Substitute Bill**

- Authorizes some county legislative authorities until 2021 to approve Group B public water systems with nine or fewer connections based on the quality of the water delivered for potable use by the system if the groundwater source does not meet water quality standards.

---

### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT

**Majority Report:** The second substitute bill be substituted therefor and the second substitute bill do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Fitzgibbon, Chair; Peterson, Vice Chair; Shea, Ranking Minority Member; Short, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Dye, Farrell, Fey, Goodman, McBride and Pike.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass. Signed by 1 member: Representative Taylor.

**Staff:** Jacob Lipson (786-7196).

**Background:**

---

*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

Under state law, public water systems are divided into two categories: Group A and Group B public water systems. Group A systems are public water systems that meet one of three criteria:

- feature 15 or more service connections;
- serve an average of 25 or more people per day for at least 60 days a year, regardless of the number of service connections; or
- serve 1,000 or more people for two consecutive days.

Group B systems encompass all other public water systems.

The Department of Health (Department) began implementing a new rule covering Group B systems that took effect in January 2014, and that was adopted by the Washington State Board of Health (Board of Health). Under this rule, local health jurisdictions may adopt and implement their own Group B system regulations, so long as they are no less stringent than the Department's rules.

Under the 2014 rule, the Department or a local health jurisdiction must approve a Group B system's design and groundwater source prior to new or expanded system operation. In order to meet groundwater source requirements in the rule, a Group B system must draw from a source that does not show a presence of coliform bacteria or exceed a maximum contaminant level for certain water pollutants, including arsenic, nitrate, and mercury. For certain other contaminants, such as iron and zinc, the Department's rules allow the Group B system to treat a raw groundwater source that exceeds the maximum contaminant level, so long as the water delivered to consumers does not exceed the maximum contaminant level.

The Washington Constitution provides for two forms of county government: (1) a "commission" form to be established through general laws by the Legislature; and (2) a "home rule" charter form, which any county may choose to adopt. In counties with a commission form of government, the legislative body must be the three-member board of elected commissioners; in home rule counties, the legislative authority may be an elected council.

---

### **Summary of Second Substitute Bill:**

Irrespective of the Board of Health's Group B system rules, a county legislative authority in a county of less than 50,000 residents east of the crest of the Cascade Mountains that borders Canada, may approve the operation of certain Group B systems that provide service to nine or fewer connections. In order for a Group B system to seek approval from the county legislative authority to expand or begin operating, the Group B system must demonstrate that the water provided by the system meets local potable water quality standards at the point of water delivery, and the raw groundwater source of the Group B system must not meet water quality standards. A Group B system that was initially authorized under state rules may receive approval from the county legislative authority to expand to up to nine connections if the system uses a raw groundwater source that does not meet local water quality standards.

By December 15 of each year, Group B systems approved by the county legislative authority must submit test results demonstrating that the potable water delivered by the system meets local potable water standards. If a local health jurisdiction requests to receive water test results submitted by a Group B system, the county legislative authority must share the results with the local health jurisdiction.

The authority for a county legislative authority to approve a Group B system is terminated as of January 1, 2021.

**Second Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:**

The second substitute bill makes the following changes to the original house bill:

- The scope of Group B water systems eligible for approval by a local county legislative authority is limited to counties east of the Cascade Mountains that border Canada and have a population of less than 50,000.
- Group B systems approved by a county legislative authority must demonstrate that the water they deliver meets potable water quality standards at the point of delivery, rather than for indoor household use.
- The authority for a county legislative authority to approve Group B water systems is limited to those systems that do not meet water quality standards for raw groundwater.
- The authority of the Department or local health jurisdiction to approve Group B water quality systems is retained for systems that meet raw groundwater quality standards.
- Previously approved Group B systems by the Department or a local health jurisdiction may expand to up to nine connections with the approval of the county legislative authority, so long as the system meets Group B water quality standards at the point of delivery but does not meet raw groundwater quality standards.
- County-approved Group B systems that do not meet raw groundwater quality standards established by the Board of Health rule must submit water quality testing results by December 15 of each year that demonstrate that water delivered by the system meets local potable water standards.
- County legislative authorities are required to share Group B system test results with a local health jurisdiction, upon request.
- The authority for county legislative authorities to approve Group B systems is terminated as of January 1, 2021.

---

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date of Second Substitute Bill:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

See House Bill Report in the 2015 Legislative Session.

**Persons Testifying:** See House Bill Report in the 2015 Legislative Session.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.