

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5487

As of February 27, 1995

Title: An act relating to creation of a water resources board.

Brief Description: Creating a water resources board within the department of ecology.

Sponsors: Senators Rasmussen, Morton, Haugen, Newhouse and Winsley.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Water Policy: 3/2/95.

SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON WATER POLICY

Staff: Bob Lee (786-7404)

Background: Several states have established state water resources boards as a means to provide for broader public participation in formulation of water resource policy.

Summary of Bill: A state water resources board is established. The board has authority over water resource policy and flood management policy matters, but these programs are to remain housed within the Department of Ecology. The board is to exercise all policy-related powers relating to water quantity and flood management matters prescribed by law, including the management, conservation, utilization, planning, development and adjudication of the state's water. The board may adopt, amend or repeal administrative rules in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act.

The board is required to appoint an administrator of water resources who has the duty to implement the policies and decisions of the board. The administrator has full supervisory authority over all employees in the water resources and flood management programs. The administrator serves at the pleasure of the board.

Nine geographic areas in the state are created, composed of either four or five counties. The Governor appoints one member from each of the geographic areas.

The board consists of nine members, appointed by the Governor from nominees submitted by the county legislative authorities. Local units of government including, but not limited to, cities, towns, public utility districts, irrigation districts, conservation districts, flood control district, and water districts may submit nominations to the their county legislative authority. Each county legislative authority submits within 60 calendar days names of nominees.

The board meets at times as it deems advisable but at least once per month. Board members receive \$100 compensation for each day served, and are entitled to reimbursement for travel, lodging and per diem.

The scope of authority of the water resources board is defined in specific sections and chapters of the statutes. These include the various water quantity and flood management statutes.

There also are created nine local water resource policy advisory boards, one for each geographic area from which a board member is appointed. Each advisory board comprises two representatives from each county selected by the county's legislative authority. Each state water resources board must with the local advisory board at least once every six months to discuss and integrate statewide water policy considerations with local water policy needs.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect on July 1, 1995.