

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## SSB 6091

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C 230 L 96  
Synopsis as Enacted

**Brief Description:** Converting water and sewer districts into water-sewer districts.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Government Operations (originally sponsored by Senators Haugen, Winsley, Sheldon, Drew, McCaslin, Long, Hale, Snyder, Heavey and Sellar).

**Senate Committee on Government Operations**

**House Committee on Government Operations**

**Background:** Water districts and sewer districts are each governed by a separate title of the RCW. Over the years, however, water districts have been authorized to provide sewer services and sewer districts have been authorized to provide water services. In recent years the Legislature has attempted to establish parallel language in each title so that when one was amended, an identical amendment would be made to the other.

Several years ago legislation was drafted that merged the two titles. Where language and authority differed, the more comprehensive or contemporary version was generally adopted. This proposed merger of the titles has been revised several times. It is felt that combining sewer district and water district authorities into one title would simplify the entire governance process for all water and sewer districts, enable operating efficiencies, and may facilitate consolidations of districts thereby reducing overhead costs.

**Summary:** The RCW title pertaining to sewer districts is merged with the RCW title pertaining to water districts.

All sewer districts and water districts become water-sewer districts with a single set of governing statutes covering general powers, governance, rates and charges, financing, formation, annexation, deannexation, consolidation, merger, elections, planning, local improvements and other miscellaneous functions. Redundant provisions are repealed and recodifications are made. Archaic and incorrect references are corrected and ambiguous language is clarified.

Where the territory of a prior sewer district overlaps the territory of a prior water district, the authority of both districts to offer new services within the overlapping territory is limited. One district may offer sewer or water services in the overlapping territory only if: (1) the other district did not previously offer those services in the overlapping territory; or (2) the other district gives its express concurrence. Prior water districts may not offer or extend sewer service in any territory without obtaining certification from the state Department of Ecology and Department of Health. The authority of water districts to provide fire protection services and impose a nonvoter-approved levy to finance such services is repealed. Multiple mergers are authorized, and the bid limit on purchase of materials is raised to \$10,000.

**Votes on Final Passage:**

Senate	44	0	
House	98	0	(House amended)
Senate	47	0	(Senate concurred)

**Effective:** July 1, 1997