

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6149

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Ecology & Parks, January 16, 1996

Title: An act relating to the development of state-wide wastewater reuse standards.

Brief Description: Establishing the city of Yelm wastewater reuse state demonstration project.

Sponsors: Senators Fraser, Swecker and Rasmussen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Ecology & Parks: 1/11/96, 1/16/96 [DP-WM].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ECOLOGY & PARKS

Majority Report: Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Fraser, Chair; Hochstatter, McAuliffe, Spanel and Swecker.

Staff: Gary Wilburn (786-7453)

Background: In 1992 the Legislature enacted reclaimed water use provisions intended to facilitate regulatory review of proposed projects and to develop uniform standards for such uses. The legislation directed the Departments of Ecology and Health to coordinate efforts toward developing an efficient and streamlined procedure for approved reclaimed water uses. In 1995 additional legislation was enacted directing state agencies with the assistance of an advisory committee to develop additional standards and procedures for specified uses such as to discharges to wetlands. The Water Reuse Advisory Committee is also assisting in developing these standards.

While use of reclaimed water holds great promise as a means of providing low-cost sources of additional water supplies for a broad variety of uses, the number of systems in place is not great. It has been suggested that it is in the interests of the state to assist with innovative new projects because statewide benefits will accrue in the information and experience gained from such projects.

Summary of Bill: Legislative findings are made regarding the benefits of reclaimed water uses, including providing new water sources, providing cost-effective water treatment techniques and costly expansion of existing treatment facilities. A reclaimed water project proposed by the city of Yelm is described in the findings. A legislative purpose is stated to recognize the city's project as a state demonstration project.

The Department of Ecology is to enter a grant agreement with the city of Yelm by January 1, 1997, that includes timelines, reporting requirements and a fund disbursement schedule based upon agreed upon project milestones. A report to the Legislature is to be provided upon project completion. The provisions relating to the grant and state demonstration project designation expire December 31, 1998.

The sum of \$7 million is appropriated to the Department of Ecology from the general fund to assist in funding the city of Yelm project.

Appropriation: \$ 7 million from the state general fund.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: There is a need to promote greater reuse of water as one means of meeting new water supply demands. The use of reclaimed water for nonpotable purposes is a promising alternative, and the city of Yelm's wastewater reuse project deserves state financial support for the information and experience it will provide in developing projects statewide.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Bill Lewallen, Snohomish County Airport (pro); Kathryn M. Wolf, City of Yelm (pro); Shelly A. Budger, City of Yelm (pro); Thomas Skillings, Skilling-Connolly, Inc. (pro); Diane Oberquell, Thurston Co. Commissioner (pro).