
HOUSE BILL 2198

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By Representatives Mastin, Chandler, Schoesler, Lisk, Mulliken, Grant, Honeyford, Koster, Delvin, Robertson, Campbell, Horn and Johnson

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1 AN ACT Relating to water rights claims; amending RCW 90.14.041 and
2 90.14.071; and adding new sections to chapter 90.14 RCW.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 90.14 RCW
5 to read as follows:

6 (1) A new period for filing statements of claim for water rights is
7 established. The filing period shall begin September 1, 1996, and
8 shall end at midnight June 30, 1997. A statement filed during this
9 filing period shall be filed as provided in RCW 90.14.051 and 90.14.061
10 and shall be subject to the provisions of this chapter regarding
11 statements of claim. This reopening of the period for filing
12 statements of claim shall not affect or impair in any respect
13 whatsoever any water right existing prior to the effective date of this
14 section. A water right embodied in a statement of claim filed under
15 this section is subordinate to any water right embodied in a permit or
16 certificate issued under chapter 90.03 or 90.44 RCW prior to the date
17 the statement of claim is filed with the department and is subordinate
18 to any water right embodied in a statement of claim filed in the water
19 rights claims registry before the effective date of this section.

1 (2) The department of ecology shall, at least once each week during
2 the month of August 1996 and at least once each month during the filing
3 period, publish a notice regarding this new filing period in newspapers
4 of general circulation in the various regions of the state. The notice
5 shall contain the substance of the following notice:

6 WATER RIGHTS NOTICE

7 Every person and entity, public or private, claiming water
8 rights established under the laws of the state of Washington,
9 are hereby notified that all water rights or claimed water
10 rights relating to the withdrawal or diversion of public
11 surface or ground waters of the state, except those water
12 rights based upon the authority of a permit or certificate
13 issued by the department of ecology or one of its predecessors
14 or based upon a statement of claim that has previously been
15 filed in the state's water rights claims registry during other
16 registration periods, must be registered with the department of
17 ecology, Olympia, Washington, on or after September 1, 1996,
18 and not later than June 30, 1997. FAILURE TO REGISTER AS
19 REQUIRED BY LAW WILL RESULT IN A WAIVER AND RELINQUISHMENT OF
20 SAID WATER RIGHT OR CLAIMED WATER RIGHT. For further
21 information contact the department of ecology, Olympia,
22 Washington, for a copy of the law providing this filing period
23 and an explanation of the law and its requirements.

24 The department shall also prepare, make available to the public,
25 and distribute to the communications media information describing the
26 types of rights for which statements of claim need not be filed, the
27 effect of filing, the effect of RCW 90.14.071, and other information
28 relevant to filings and statements of claim.

29 (3) The department of ecology shall ensure that employees of the
30 department are readily available to respond to inquiries regarding
31 filing statements of claim and that all of the information the
32 department has at its disposal that is relevant to an inquiry regarding
33 a particular potential claim, including information regarding other
34 rights and claims in the vicinity of the potentially claimed right, is
35 available to the person making the inquiry. The department shall
36 dedicate additional staff in each of the department's regional offices
37 and in the department's central office to ensure that responses and

1 information are provided in a timely manner during each of the business
2 days during the month of August 1996 and during the new filing period.

3 (4) To assist the department in avoiding unnecessary duplication,
4 the department shall provide to a requestor, within ten working days of
5 receiving the request, the records of any water right claimed, listed,
6 recorded, or otherwise existing in the records of the department or its
7 predecessor agencies, including any report of a referee in a water
8 rights adjudication. This information shall be provided as required by
9 this subsection if the request is provided in writing from the owner of
10 the water right or from the holder of a possessory interest in any real
11 property for water right records associated with the property or if the
12 requestor is an attorney for such an owner. The information regarding
13 water rights in the area served by a regional office of the department
14 shall also be provided within ten working days to any requestor who
15 requests to review the information in person in the department's
16 regional office. The information held by the headquarters office of
17 the department shall also be provided within ten working days to any
18 requestor who requests to review the information in person in the
19 department's headquarters office. The requirements of this subsection
20 that records and information be provided to requestors within ten
21 working days may not be construed as limiting in any manner the
22 obligations of the department to provide public access to public
23 records as required by chapter 42.17 RCW.

24 **Sec. 2.** RCW 90.14.041 and 1988 c 127 s 73 are each amended to read
25 as follows:

26 All persons using or claiming the right to withdraw or divert and
27 make beneficial use of public surface or ground waters of the state,
28 except as (~~hereinafter~~) provided in this section, RCW 90.14.043, and
29 section 1 of this act, shall file with the department of ecology not
30 later than June 30, 1974, a statement of claim for each water right
31 asserted on a form provided by the department. Neither this section
32 (~~shall not~~) nor section 1 of this act apply to any water rights which
33 are based on the authority of a permit or certificate issued by the
34 department of ecology or one of its predecessors. Further, section 1
35 of this act does not apply to the beneficial uses of ground water
36 exempted from permit and application requirements by RCW 90.44.050.

1 **Sec. 3.** RCW 90.14.071 and 1969 ex.s. c 284 s 16 are each amended
2 to read as follows:

3 Except as provided in section 5 of this act or as exempted from
4 filing by RCW 90.14.041, any person claiming the right to divert or
5 withdraw waters of the state as set forth in RCW 90.14.041, who fails
6 to file a statement of claim as provided in RCW 90.14.041, 90.14.043,
7 or section 1 of this act and in RCW 90.14.051 and 90.14.061, shall be
8 conclusively deemed to have waived and relinquished any right, title,
9 or interest in said right.

10 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** A new section is added to chapter 90.14 RCW
11 to read as follows:

12 Any person or entity, or successor to such person or entity, having
13 a statement of claim on file with the water rights claims registry on
14 the effective date of this section, may submit to the department of
15 ecology for filing an amendment to such a statement of claim as
16 provided in this section. Such an amendment may be submitted only to
17 correct an error in the statement filed and the person submitting the
18 amendment shall attest in writing that the amendment does not
19 constitute an expansion of the right for which the statement of claim
20 was intended. Such an amendment may be submitted only during the
21 period established in section 1 of this act for filing statements of
22 claim.

23 The department shall accept any such submission and file the
24 amendment in the registry unless the department by written
25 determination concludes that the requirements of this section have not
26 been satisfied. Any person aggrieved by a determination of the
27 department may obtain a review thereof by filing a petition for review
28 with the pollution control hearings board within thirty days of the
29 date of the determination by the department. The provisions of RCW
30 90.14.081 shall apply to any amendment filed under this section. This
31 section shall not be construed as limiting the authority of a person or
32 entity to submit an amendment under RCW 90.14.065.

33 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** A new section is added to chapter 90.14 RCW
34 to read as follows:

35 During the period beginning March 1, 1994, and ending at midnight
36 June 30, 1997, neither the department of ecology nor the pollution
37 control hearings board may determine or find that a water right has

1 been waived or relinquished under this chapter based on the failure of
2 any person or entity to file a statement of claim for the right under
3 this chapter. Any finding or determination issued contrary to this
4 section is void. If the department or the board determined that a
5 person waived or relinquished a water right during the time period
6 specified in this section, but prior to the effective date of this
7 section, the sole remedy for the person shall be to file a new claim or
8 submit an amendment under section 1 or 4 of this act or RCW 90.14.065.

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