
SENATE BILL 5203

State of Washington

59th Legislature

2005 Regular Session

By Senators Parlette, Morton, Mulliken, Honeyford, Stevens, Deccio, Swecker, Roach, Delvin and Sheldon

Read first time 01/18/2005. Referred to Committee on Water, Energy & Environment.

1 AN ACT Relating to a water policy pilot project in the Methow river
2 basin; and creating a new section.

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

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that a recent
5 United States geological survey of hydrology in the Methow river basin
6 determined that the artificial recharge of Twin Lakes aquifer and
7 surface waters would likely provide environmental benefits to the
8 Methow river during critical periods of low flow. The legislature also
9 finds that a department of ecology funded assessment indicates that a
10 significant portion of the current decline in aquifer levels in the
11 Twin Lakes basin is the result of irrigation transportation
12 efficiencies implemented by Wolf Creek reclamation district. The
13 legislature therefore intends that a pilot project be conducted to
14 determine the best approach to restore aquifer levels, and the
15 associated environmental benefits, and to study the potential role of
16 artificial recharge in meeting the existing needs of people and the
17 environment in the Methow river basin by temporarily putting water into
18 Barnsley and Big Twin Lakes and the aquifer in continuity with the
19 lakes.

1 (2) The legislature directs the department of ecology, in
2 cooperation with the United States geological survey and the bureau of
3 reclamation, to conduct a Twin Lakes restoration pilot project and to
4 make diligent efforts to: (a) Locate the most appropriate source or
5 sources of water; (b) utilize appropriate water right mechanisms to
6 permit the temporary use of that water; (c) restore Barnsley and Twin
7 Lakes surface waters and the aquifer in continuity with the lakes to an
8 elevation of one thousand seven hundred ninety-six feet (up to but not
9 exceeding the dead tree line) utilizing methods such as ground water
10 injection and direct introduction of water into Barnsley and Big Twin
11 Lakes; (d) maintain such levels, with a fluctuation of no more than two
12 feet below the prescribed elevation; and (e) measure and study the
13 resulting hydrological effects of such a recharge within the Methow
14 river basin and the Twin Lakes basin.

15 (3) Before December 1, 2005, and December 1, 2006, the department
16 of ecology shall provide reports to the appropriate legislative
17 committees summarizing the progress of the pilot project. Before June
18 30, 2007, the department of ecology shall provide a report of
19 hydrological findings to the appropriate legislative committees.

20 (4) Temporary water right permits issued for the Twin Lakes
21 restoration pilot project terminate June 30, 2007, or upon the
22 department of ecology's issuance or denial of a permanent water right
23 for Twin Lakes restoration, whichever occurs first.

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