

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 5113

As Reported by House Committee On:
Agriculture & Natural Resources

Title: An act relating to barley straw for water clarification.

Brief Description: Authorizing the application of barley straw to waters of the state.

Sponsors: Senators Schoesler, Rasmussen, Holmquist, Clements, Morton, Hatfield and Pridemore.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Agriculture & Natural Resources: 3/22/07, 3/26/07 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Allows the use of barley straw for water clarification purposes without a state waste discharge permit.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 15 members: Representatives B. Sullivan, Chair; Blake, Vice Chair; Kretz, Ranking Minority Member; Warnick, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Dickerson, Eickmeyer, Grant, Hailey, Kagi, Lantz, McCoy, Newhouse, Orcutt, Strow and VanDeWege.

Staff: Jaclyn Ford (786-7339).

Background:

Studies have shown that barley straw can reduce the growth of algae when used in specific ways. When barley straw is put into water, it starts to rot; during this process a chemical is released which inhibits the growth of algae. The chemical released by the straw does not kill algal cells already present, but it prevents the growth of new algal cells.

Summary of Bill:

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Barley straw may be used for water clarification purposes without a state waste discharge permit. Certain criteria must be met in order to qualify for the exemption. For instance, the straw must be placed in the water in early spring, and must be placed in areas where control is desired, such as around docks and swim areas.

If a project would normally require a Hydraulic Project Approval Permit, the use of barley straw would not exempt a project from requiring a Hydraulic Project Approval Permit.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Barley straw can be used for small ponds; the use of barley straw would not be suitable for larger bodies of water. The use of barley straw is much less toxic than other alternatives and can be quite successful in keeping the water clear of algae.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Senator Schoesler, prime sponsor; and Melodie Selby, Department of Ecology.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.