
HOUSE BILL 1836

State of Washington

64th Legislature

2015 Regular Session

By Representatives Stanford, Blake, Lytton, Walkinshaw, Gregerson, and Tarleton

Read first time 01/30/15. Referred to Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources.

1 AN ACT Relating to state drought preparedness; amending RCW
2 43.83B.400, 43.83B.405, 43.83B.410, 43.83B.415, 43.83B.360,
3 43.83B.430, 90.86.020, 90.86.030, and 90.03.280; adding a new section
4 to chapter 43.83B RCW; adding new sections to chapter 90.86 RCW;
5 adding a new section to chapter 43.21C RCW; and repealing RCW
6 90.86.010.

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

8 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 43.83B
9 RCW to read as follows:

10 The definitions in this section apply throughout RCW 43.83B.400
11 through 43.83B.420 unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

12 (1) "Department" means the department of ecology.

13 (2) "Drought condition" means that the water supply for a
14 geographical area, or for a significant portion of a geographical
15 area, is below seventy-five percent of normal and the water shortage
16 is likely to create undue hardships for various water uses and users.

17 (3) "Emergency agricultural water supply funds" means moneys
18 appropriated from the state emergency water projects revolving
19 account created under RCW 43.83B.360.

1 **Sec. 2.** RCW 43.83B.400 and 1989 c 171 s 1 are each amended to
2 read as follows:

3 It is the intent of the legislature to provide emergency powers
4 to the department (~~(of ecology)~~) to enable it to take actions, in a
5 timely and expeditious manner, that are designed to alleviate
6 hardships and reduce burdens on various water users and uses arising
7 from drought conditions. (~~(As used in this chapter, "drought~~
8 ~~condition" means that the water supply for a geographical area or for~~
9 ~~a significant portion of a geographical area is below seventy-five~~
10 ~~percent of normal and the water shortage is likely to create undue~~
11 ~~hardships for various water uses and users.)~~)

12 **Sec. 3.** RCW 43.83B.405 and 1989 c 171 s 2 are each amended to
13 read as follows:

14 (1)(a) Whenever it appears to the department (~~(of ecology)~~) that
15 a drought condition either exists or is forecast to occur within the
16 state or portions (~~(thereof)~~) of the state, the department (~~(of~~
17 ~~ecology)~~) is authorized to issue orders, pursuant to rules previously
18 adopted, to implement the powers as set forth in RCW 43.83B.410
19 through 43.83B.420. (~~(The department shall, immediately upon the~~
20 ~~issuance of an order under this section, cause said order to be~~
21 ~~published in newspapers of general circulation in the areas of the~~
22 ~~state to which the order relates.)~~)

23 (b) Prior to the issuance of an order under this section, the
24 department (~~(shall (a))~~) must:

25 (i) Consult with and obtain the views of the federal and state
26 government entities identified in the drought contingency plan
27 periodically revised by the department pursuant to RCW
28 43.83B.410(~~(4)~~, and ~~(b)~~) (2)(c);

29 (ii) Notify the joint legislative committee on water supply
30 during drought created in RCW 90.86.020; and

31 (iii) Obtain the written approval of the governor.

32 (c) Orders issued under this section shall be deemed orders for
33 the purposes of chapter 34.05 RCW and be published as appropriate by
34 the department in any area of the state affected by the order.

35 (2)(a) Any order issued under subsection (1) of this section
36 (~~(shall)~~) must contain a termination date for the order. The
37 termination date (~~(shall be)~~) may not be later than one calendar year
38 from the date the order is issued. Although the department may, with
39 the written approval of the governor, change the termination date by

1 amending the order, no such amendment or series of amendments may
2 have the effect of extending its termination to a date which is later
3 than two calendar years after the issuance of the order.

4 ~~((+3))~~(b) The provisions of this subsection (2) ~~((of this~~
5 ~~section))~~ do not preclude the issuance of more than one order under
6 subsection (1) of this section for different areas of the state or
7 sequentially for the same area as the need arises for such an order
8 or orders.

9 **Sec. 4.** RCW 43.83B.410 and 1989 c 171 s 3 are each amended to
10 read as follows:

11 (1)(a) Upon the issuance of an order under RCW 43.83B.405, the
12 department ~~((of ecology is empowered to:~~

13 ~~(+1)(a))~~ May authorize emergency withdrawal of public surface and
14 ground waters, including dead storage within reservoirs, on a
15 temporary basis and authorize ~~((associated physical works which may~~
16 ~~be))~~ either temporary or permanent associated physical works.

17 (b) The termination date for the authority to make ~~((such))~~ an
18 emergency withdrawal under this section may not be later than the
19 termination date of the order issued under RCW 43.83B.405 under which
20 the power to authorize the withdrawal is established.

21 (c) The department ~~((of ecology))~~ may issue ~~((such))~~ an emergency
22 withdrawal authorization only when, after investigation and after
23 providing appropriate federal, state, and local governmental bodies
24 an opportunity to comment, the following are found by the department:

25 (i) The waters proposed for withdrawal are to be used for a
26 beneficial use involving a previously established activity or
27 purpose;

28 (ii) The previously established activity or purpose was furnished
29 water through rights applicable to the use of a public body of water
30 that cannot be exercised due to the lack of water arising from
31 natural drought conditions; and

32 (iii) The proposed withdrawal will not reduce flows or levels
33 below essential minimums necessary ~~((+A))~~ to ~~((assure))~~ ensure the
34 maintenance of fisheries requirements~~((+))~~ and ~~((+B))~~ to protect
35 federal and state interests including, among others, power
36 generation, navigation, and existing water rights~~((+)~~

37 ~~(+))~~. In making a finding under this subsection relating to the
38 requirements of fisheries, the department shall not limit its
39 analysis to anadromous or commercial species only.

1 (d) All emergency withdrawal authorizations issued under this
2 section shall contain provisions that allow for termination of
3 withdrawals, in whole or in part, whenever withdrawals will conflict
4 with flows and levels as provided in ~~((a))~~ (c)(iii) of this
5 subsection.

6 (e) Domestic and irrigation uses of public surface and ground
7 waters shall be given priority in determining "beneficial uses."

8 (f)(i) As to water withdrawal and associated works authorized
9 under this subsection, the requirements of chapter 43.21C RCW and
10 public bidding requirements as otherwise provided by law are waived
11 and inapplicable.

12 (ii) All state and local agencies with authority to issue permits
13 or other authorizations for ~~((such))~~ associated works shall, to the
14 extent possible, expedite the processing of the permits or
15 authorizations in keeping with the emergency nature of the requests
16 and shall provide a decision to the applicant within fifteen calendar
17 days of the date of application.

18 (iii) All state departments or other agencies having jurisdiction
19 over state or other public lands, if ~~((such))~~ access to the lands are
20 necessary to effectuate the withdrawal authorizations issued under
21 this subsection, ~~((shall))~~ must provide short-term easements or other
22 appropriate property interest upon the payment of the fair market
23 value. This mandate shall not apply to any lands of the state that
24 are reserved for a special purpose or use that cannot properly be
25 carried out if the property interest were conveyed~~((+))~~.

26 (2) The department may also, upon the issuance of an order under
27 RCW 43.83B.405:

28 (a)(i) Approve a temporary change in purpose, place of use, or
29 point of diversion, consistent with existing state policy allowing
30 transfer or lease of waters between willing parties, as provided for
31 in RCW 90.03.380, 90.03.390, and 90.44.100. However, compliance with
32 any requirements of ~~((a))~~ notice of newspaper publication of these
33 sections or ~~((b))~~ the state environmental policy act, chapter
34 43.21C RCW, is not required when such changes are necessary to
35 respond to drought conditions as determined by the department ~~((of~~
36 ~~ecology))~~.

37 (ii) An approval of a temporary change of a water right as
38 authorized under this subsection is not admissible as evidence in
39 either supporting or contesting the validity of water claims in *State*
40 *of Washington, Department of Ecology v. Acquavella*, Yakima county

1 superior court number 77-2-01484-5 or any similar proceeding where
2 the existence of a water right is at issue.

3 ~~((+3))~~ (b) Employ additional persons for specified terms of
4 time, consistent with the term of a drought condition, as are
5 necessary to ensure the successful performance of the activities
6 associated with implementing the emergency drought program of this
7 chapter.

8 ~~((+4))~~ (c) Revise the drought contingency plan previously
9 developed by the department ~~((+and))~~.

10 ~~((+5))~~ (d) Acquire needed emergency drought-related equipment.

11 **Sec. 5.** RCW 43.83B.415 and 1989 c 171 s 4 are each amended to
12 read as follows:

13 (1)(a) The department ~~((of ecology))~~ is authorized to make loans,
14 grants, or combinations of loans and grants, from emergency
15 agricultural water supply funds when necessary to provide water to
16 alleviate emergency drought conditions in order to ensure the
17 survival of irrigated crops and the state's fisheries. ~~((For the
18 purposes of this section, "emergency agricultural water supply funds"
19 means funds appropriated from the state emergency water projects
20 revolving account created under RCW 43.83B.360.))~~

21 (b) The department ~~((of ecology))~~ may make the loans, grants, or
22 combinations of loans and grants, as matching funds in any case where
23 federal, local, or other funds have been made available on a matching
24 basis. The department may make a loan of up to ninety percent of the
25 total eligible project cost or combination loan and grant up to one
26 hundred percent of the total single project cost. The grant portion
27 for any single project shall not exceed twenty percent of the total
28 project cost except that, for activities forecast to have fifty
29 percent or less of normal seasonal water supply, the grant portion
30 for any single project or entity shall not exceed forty percent of
31 the total project cost.

32 (c) No single entity shall receive more than ten percent of the
33 total emergency agricultural water supply funds available for drought
34 relief.

35 ~~((These funds shall))~~ (d) Emergency agricultural water supply
36 funds available for drought relief may not be used for
37 nonagricultural drought relief purposes unless there are no other
38 capital budget funds available for these purposes. In any biennium
39 the total expenditures of emergency agricultural water supply funds

1 for nonagricultural drought relief purposes may not exceed ten
2 percent of the total of such funds available during that biennium.

3 (2)(a) Except as provided in (b) of this subsection, (~~after June~~
4 ~~30, 1989,~~) emergency agricultural water supply funds, including the
5 repayment of loans and any accrued interest, shall not be used for
6 any purpose except during drought conditions as determined under RCW
7 43.83B.400 and 43.83B.405.

8 (b) Emergency agricultural water supply funds may be used on a
9 one-time basis for the development of procedures to be used by state
10 governmental entities to implement the state's drought contingency
11 plan.

12 **Sec. 6.** RCW 43.83B.360 and 2009 c 564 s 938 are each amended to
13 read as follows:

14 The proceeds from the sale of bonds authorized by RCW
15 43.83B.300(~~(7)~~) and 43.83B.355 through 43.83B.375 shall be deposited
16 in the state emergency water projects revolving account, hereby
17 created in the state treasury, and shall be used exclusively for the
18 purposes specified in RCW 43.83B.300, (~~and~~) 43.83B.355 through
19 43.83B.375, and 43.83B.415 and for the payment of expenses incurred
20 in the issuance and sale of such bonds. (~~During the 2009-2011 fiscal~~
21 ~~biennium, the legislature may transfer from the state emergency water~~
22 ~~projects revolving account to the state general fund such amounts as~~
23 ~~reflect the excess fund balance of the account.~~)

24 **Sec. 7.** RCW 43.83B.430 and 2011 c 5 s 911 are each amended to
25 read as follows:

26 (1) The state drought preparedness account is created in the
27 state treasury. All receipts from appropriated funds designated for
28 the account and funds transferred from the state emergency water
29 projects revolving account must be deposited into the account. Moneys
30 in the account may be spent only after appropriation. Expenditures
31 from the account may be used only for drought preparedness and as
32 provided in RCW 43.83B.415. (~~During the 2009-2011 fiscal biennium,~~
33 ~~the legislature may transfer from the state drought preparedness~~
34 ~~account to the state general fund such amounts as reflect the excess~~
35 ~~fund balance of the account.~~)

36 (2) As part of drought preparedness, moneys in the account may be
37 used for the negotiation of agreements or contracts before a drought
38 is declared that identifies projects, measures, sources of water, and

1 other resources that can be accessed during a drought to alleviate
2 drought conditions that may affect public health and safety, drinking
3 water supplies, agricultural activities, or fish and wildlife
4 survival.

5 **Sec. 8.** RCW 90.86.020 and 2005 c 60 s 2 are each amended to read
6 as follows:

7 (1) The joint legislative committee on water supply during
8 drought is created.

9 (2) The committee shall consist of ((four senators and four
10 representatives who shall be selected biennially as follows:

11 (1) The president of the senate shall appoint four members from
12 the senate to serve on the committee, including the chair of the
13 committee responsible for water resource issues. Two members from
14 each major political party must be appointed.

15 (2) The speaker of the house of representatives shall appoint
16 four members from the house of representatives to serve on the
17 committee, including the chair of the committee responsible for water
18 resource issues. Two members from each major political party must be
19 appointed.

20 (3) The committee shall elect a chair and a vice chair. The chair
21 shall be a member of the house of representatives in even-numbered
22 years and a member of the senate in odd-numbered years.

23 (4) The presiding officer of the appropriate legislative chamber
24 shall fill any vacancies occurring on the committee by appointment
25 from the same political party as the departing member.

26 (5) Members shall serve until their successors are appointed as
27 provided in this section, or until they are no longer members of the
28 legislature, whichever is sooner)) eight legislators who shall be
29 selected biennially as follows:

30 (a) The president of the senate shall appoint two members from
31 each of the two largest caucuses of the senate.

32 (b) The speaker of the house of representatives shall appoint two
33 members from each of the two largest caucuses of the house of
34 representatives.

35 (c) In making appointments to the committee, the speaker of the
36 house of representatives and the president of the senate must provide
37 the chairs of the committees with jurisdiction over water resources
38 with the opportunity to serve on the committee as one of the two
39 respective caucus appointments.

1 (d) The speaker of the house of representatives or the president
2 of the senate must fill any vacancies occurring on the committee by
3 appointment from the same caucus as the departing member.

4 (3) The committee shall select a chair and a vice chair from
5 among its membership. However, the chair must be a member of the
6 house of representatives in even-numbered years and a member of the
7 senate in odd-numbered years.

8 (4) Members of the committee shall serve until one of the
9 following events occurs:

10 (a) A successor is appointed as provided in this section; or

11 (b) The member of the committee discontinues service in the
12 legislative chamber from which the member was appointed.

13 **Sec. 9.** RCW 90.86.030 and 2010 1st sp.s. c 7 s 122 are each
14 amended to read as follows:

15 (1) The joint legislative committee on water supply during
16 drought shall convene from time to time at the call of the chair, or
17 if no chair is currently designated, by a majority of committee
18 members. The committee may convene under the following circumstances:

19 (a) When a drought conditions order under RCW 43.83B.405 is in
20 effect(~~(, or~~));

21 (b) When the chair determines(~~(, in consultation with the~~
22 department of ecology,) that it is likely that (~~(such an))~~) a drought
23 conditions order will be issued within the next year; or

24 (c) When the chair determines that state drought preparedness
25 planning, including the building of legislative institutional
26 knowledge of the topic and the receipt of information under
27 subsection (2) of this section, would benefit from the convening of
28 the committee.

29 (2)(a) The committee may:

30 (i) Request and review information relating to water supply
31 conditions in the state, and economic, environmental, and other
32 impacts relating to decreased water supply being experienced or
33 anticipated;

34 (ii) Receive ongoing information from the department of ecology
35 related to water supply conditions prior to a drought declaration and
36 in years when a drought is not anticipated;

37 (iii) Provide nonbinding direction and advice to drought response
38 entities;

1 (iv) Provide oversight for the use of moneys in, and assistance
2 in developing budget requests for, the state drought preparedness
3 account created in RCW 43.83B.430; and

4 (v) Coordinate with drought response entities in processing
5 lessons learned from drought response activities, including years
6 when a drought is declared and years when the decision is made to not
7 declare a drought, and improve efforts to preemptively mitigate the
8 impacts of a drought.

9 (b) The ((governor's)) executive water emergency committee
10 identified in WAC 173-166-030 as it existed on the effective date of
11 this section, the department of ecology, and other state agencies
12 with water management or related responsibilities shall cooperate in
13 responding to requests from the committee.

14 (3)(a) During drought conditions in which an order issued under
15 RCW 43.83B.405 is in effect, the department of ecology shall provide
16 to the committee no less than monthly a report describing drought
17 response activities of the department and other state and federal
18 agencies participating on the water supply availability committee
19 identified in WAC 173-166-030 as it existed on the effective date of
20 this section.

21 (b) The report ((shall)) from the department of ecology must
22 include information regarding applications for, and approvals and
23 denials of, emergency water withdrawals and temporary changes or
24 transfers of, water rights under RCW 43.83B.410 and other information
25 requested by the committee.

26 (4) When a drought declaration is not in effect, the department
27 of ecology shall provide to the committee, by January 15th of each
28 year, an assessment of predicted water supply for the coming year,
29 along with, if necessary, updates to the prediction during the first
30 half of the calendar year. This information may be provided in
31 written or electronic form if the committee has no official plans to
32 convene a meeting. The department of ecology may provide written or
33 electronic submissions to the staff of the committee identified in
34 section 10 of this act.

35 (5) The committee ((from time to time shall)) may, if deemed
36 appropriate by a majority of the committee, make recommendations to
37 the appropriate committee of the senate and house of representatives
38 on budgetary and legislative actions that will improve the state's
39 drought response programs and planning.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 10.** A new section is added to chapter 90.86
2 RCW to read as follows:

3 Staff support for the joint legislative committee on water supply
4 during drought shall be provided by the house of representatives
5 office of program research and senate committee services.

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 11.** A new section is added to chapter 90.86
7 RCW to read as follows:

8 (1) The members of the joint legislative committee on water
9 supply during drought shall serve without additional compensation,
10 but must be reimbursed for travel expenses in accordance with RCW
11 44.04.120 while attending meetings of the joint legislative committee
12 on water supply during drought.

13 (2) The expenses of the joint legislative committee on water
14 supply during drought must be paid jointly by the senate and the
15 house of representatives. Committee expenditures are subject to
16 approval by the senate facilities and operations committee and the
17 house of representatives executive rules committee, or their
18 successor committees.

19 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 12.** A new section is added to chapter 43.21C
20 RCW to read as follows:

21 Emergency water withdraws and associated physical works, and
22 temporary changes in purpose, place of use, or point of diversion for
23 a water right are exempt from the provisions of this chapter if
24 authorized by the department of ecology under RCW 43.83B.410.

25 **Sec. 13.** RCW 90.03.280 and 1994 c 264 s 83 are each amended to
26 read as follows:

27 (~~Upon receipt of a proper application, the department shall~~
28 ~~instruct the applicant to publish notice thereof~~) Except for
29 temporary changes in purpose, place of use, or point of diversion
30 consistent with the finding of a drought condition under RCW
31 43.83B.410, the department shall, upon receipt of a proper
32 application, instruct the applicant to publish notice of application
33 in a form and within a time prescribed by the department in a
34 newspaper of general circulation published in the county or counties
35 in which the storage, diversion, and use is to be made, and in such
36 other newspapers as the department may direct, once a week for two
37 consecutive weeks. Upon receipt by the department of an application

1 it shall send notice (~~thereof~~) of the application containing
2 pertinent information to the director of the department of fish and
3 wildlife.

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 14.** RCW 90.86.010 (Joint legislative
5 committee on water supply during drought) and 2005 c 60 s 1 are each
6 repealed.

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