
Environment Committee

HB 2298

Brief Description: Concerning wastewater operator certifications.

Sponsors: Representatives Haler, Fitzgibbon, Dolan, Fey, Hudgins, McBride, Stanford and Ormsby; by request of Department of Ecology.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Authorizes the Department of Ecology (Ecology) to establish wastewater treatment plant operator certification fees in an amount that recovers the expenses incurred by Ecology in administering the wastewater treatment plant operator certification program.
- Directs Ecology to conduct a workload analysis and prepare a biennial budget estimate for the wastewater treatment plant operator certification program.

Hearing Date: 1/11/18

Staff: Robert Hatfield (786-7117).

Background:

The Department of Ecology (Ecology) implements the Wastewater Operator Certification program (program). To implement the program, Ecology is authorized to categorize wastewater treatment plants by size, type, and complexity to address the experience and skill level needed by a certified operator to protect the public health and the state's waters; determine qualifications and certification of operators for different classification of wastewater treatment plants; and to certify operators.

Certification under the program is achieved through a computer-based examination and is available in five levels, each with progressively higher requirements for education and experience. Certification must be renewed every three years. There are currently around 2,000 certified wastewater treatment plant operators in Washington.

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.

The fee for a wastewater treatment plant operator certificate is \$50 for a new certificate and \$30 for a renewed certificate. The fee levels are set in statute and were last amended in 1987, when they were raised from the original amounts of \$10 for a new certificate and \$5 for a renewal. The fee revenue is deposited into the State General Fund.

Summary of Bill:

The Department of Ecology (Ecology) is authorized to establish application fees and renewal fees for the wastewater treatment plant operator certificate.

The fees must be established in an amount that fully recovers, but does not exceed, Ecology's cost to operate the wastewater operator certification program, as identified in Ecology's biennial operating budget.

Ecology must conduct a workload analysis and prepare a biennial budget estimate for the wastewater treatment plant operator certification program.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 3, 2018.

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