

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1267

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Energy, Environment & Telecommunications, March 9, 2017

Title: An act relating to creating the wastewater treatment plant operator certification account.

Brief Description: Creating the wastewater treatment plant operator certification account.

Sponsors: Representatives DeBolt, Hudgins, Dolan, Fitzgibbon and Haler; by request of Department of Ecology.

Brief History: Passed House: 2/27/17, 77-19.

Committee Activity: Energy, Environment & Telecommunications: 3/09/17, 3/09/17 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates the Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator Certification account.
- Directs fees for wastewater treatment plant operator certification into the new account.
- Repeals provision requiring fees received to be deposited into the state General Fund.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, ENVIRONMENT & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Ericksen, Chair; Sheldon, Vice Chair; Carlyle, Ranking Minority Member; Brown, Hobbs, Honeyford, Ranker, Short and Wellman.

Staff: Jan Odano (786-7486)

Background: The Department of Ecology (Ecology) implements the Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator Certification program (Program). To implement the Program, Ecology is authorized to categorize wastewater treatment plants by size, type, and complexity to (1) address the experience and skill level needed by a certified operator to protect the public health and the state's waters; (2) determine qualifications and certification of operators for different classification of wastewater treatment plants; and (3) to certify operators. A wastewater treatment plant must be operated by a certified operator.

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.

There are five levels of wastewater certification in Washington. The certification levels range from an operator in training to Group IV. Each level of certification has education and experience requirements and requires the applicant to take and pass an exam. All certification levels require a high school diploma or GED, in addition to specific experience and college credit. Certification must be renewed every three years. Currently, there are approximately 2000 certified wastewater treatment plant operators in the state.

Ecology is required to collect fees for issuing and renewing certificates sufficient to cover the cost of the Program. The fees are set in statute. A new certificate fee is \$50. A renewed certificate fee is \$0. All fees received in the administration of the Program are deposited into the state General Fund.

Summary of Bill: The Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator Certification account is created. All fees paid to the Program must be deposited into the account. Ecology must use funds from this account for the purposes of the Program. The provision requiring fees received for the administration of the Program be deposited into the state General Fund is repealed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Certification is the first line of defense to have people properly trained as wastewater treatment plant operators. This program allows Ecology to check their education and their abilities.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Don Seeberger, Ecology.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.