

RCW 90.54.180 Water use efficiency and conservation programs and practices. Consistent with the fundamentals of water resource policy set forth in this chapter, state and local governments, individuals, corporations, groups and other entities shall be encouraged to carry out water use efficiency and conservation programs and practices consistent with the following:

(1) Water efficiency and conservation programs should utilize an appropriate mix of economic incentives, cost share programs, regulatory programs, and technical and public information efforts. Programs which encourage voluntary participation are preferred.

(2) Increased water use efficiency and reclaimed water should receive consideration as a potential source of water in state and local water resource planning processes. In determining the cost-effectiveness of alternative water sources, consideration should be given to the benefits of conservation, wastewater recycling, and impoundment of waters. Where reclaimed water is a feasible replacement source of water, it shall be used by state agencies and state facilities for nonpotable water uses in lieu of the use of potable water. For purposes of this requirement, feasible replacement source means (a) the reclaimed water is of adequate quality and quantity for the proposed use; (b) the proposed use is approved by the departments of ecology and health; (c) the reclaimed water can be reliably supplied by a local public agency or public water system; and (d) the cost of the reclaimed water is reasonable relative to the costs of conservation or other potentially available supplies of potable water, after taking into account all costs and benefits, including environmental costs and benefits.

(3) In determining the cost-effectiveness of alternative water sources, full consideration should be given to the benefits of storage which can reduce the damage to stream banks and property, increase the utilization of land, provide water for municipal, industrial, agricultural, and other beneficial uses, provide for the generation of electric power from renewable resources, and improve streamflow regimes for fishery and other instream uses.

(4) Entities receiving state financial assistance for construction of water source expansion or acquisition of new sources shall develop, and implement if cost-effective, a water use efficiency and conservation element of a water supply plan pursuant to RCW 43.20.230(1).

(5) State programs to improve water use efficiency should focus on those areas of the state in which water is overappropriated; areas that experience diminished streamflows or aquifer levels; regional areas that the governor has identified as high priority for investments in improved water quality and quantity, including the Spokane river, the Columbia river basin, and the Puget Sound; areas most likely to be affected by global warming; and areas where projected water needs, including those for instream flows, exceed available supplies.

(6) Existing and future generations of citizens of the state of Washington should be made aware of the importance of the state's water resources and the need for wise and efficient use and development of this vital resource. In order to increase this awareness, state agencies should integrate public information programs on increasing water use efficiency into existing public information efforts. This effort shall be coordinated with other levels of government, including local governments and Indian tribes. [2007 c 445 § 9; 1989 c 348 § 5.]

Findings—Intent—2007 c 445: See note following RCW 90.46.005.

Severability—1989 c 348: See note following RCW 90.54.020.