

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1444

*As Reported By House Committee on:
Natural Resources & Parks*

Title: An act relating to individuals or water purveyors identified as qualified satellite system management agencies.

Brief Description: Directing that criteria be established designating individuals or water purveyors as satellite system management agencies.

Sponsor(s): Representatives Miller, Fraser, McLean, Valle, Edmondson, Rayburn and Jones; by request of Joint Select Committee on Water Resource Policy.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Natural Resources & Parks, February 26, 1991, DPS.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
NATURAL RESOURCES & PARKS**

Majority Report: *That Substitute House Bill No. 1444 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.* Signed by 11 members: Representatives Belcher, Chair; Scott, Vice Chair; Beck, Ranking Minority Member; Brumsickle, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Dellwo; Fraser; Hargrove; Morton; Riley; Sheldon; and Wynne.

Staff: Randy Acker (786-7129).

Background: Under the Public Water System Management Act of 1977 certain areas in the State have been declared "critical water supply service areas" because of either a proliferation of inadequate small systems or water supply problems that threaten reliability or quality. Within those areas, the Department of Health, local governments, and water purveyors have developed coordinated water plans. Those plans designate service territories for the water utilities in those areas. Within those service territories, no new purveyors of public water supplies are to be permitted unless the existing utility is unable to supply water. This coordinated planning has led to a "satellite management" system, where existing larger purveyors either own or operate water systems in their service territory that are not physically connected to their system.

Many professionals in the drinking water field feel this approach has provided better operation and management of water supplies in these critical water supply service areas, and that such a program, even on an optional basis, would have value in areas of the State that have not been determined to be critical areas.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The Department of Health is directed to adopt rules that establish criteria for designating individuals or water purveyors as qualified satellite system management agencies. The designation would be for ownership or operation, or both, of an existing or proposed water system. The criteria are to include financial integrity and operational capability. The department must develop a list of approved satellite system management agencies that meet the established criteria, and make the list available to the counties.

Each county is required to identify potential satellite system management agencies for areas where no purveyor has been designated under coordinated water plans, or where an existing purveyor is unable or unwilling to provide service.

The department must periodically review the approved agencies for compliance with the criteria. Satellite system management agencies are subject to re-approval by the department but not less than once every five years. The department may assess reasonable fees to cover the costs of approval and periodic review. All receipts are to be deposited in the Satellite System Management Account. The account is subject to allotment procedures but no appropriation is required for expenditures.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: Clarifies that referring an individual proposing a new system to a satellite agency is for the purpose of discussing the possibility of having the agency own or operate the system and not to require that such an arrangement be made. A definition of satellite system management is added.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: Small water systems have been a major problem in terms of providing reliable and drinkable water, and are in need of help in their operations. This bill can help small systems to continue to exist by providing professional staff that otherwise would not be available. The bill is consistent with good planning and management.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Bob Wubben, Water Utility Council; Ken Merry, Tacoma City Water; Bill Lichty, Department of Health; and Hedia Adelsman, Department of Ecology.