

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## SHB 1710

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*As Passed Legislature*

**Title:** An act relating to water systems operator certification and registration.

**Brief Description:** Requiring certification of water systems operators.

**Sponsor(s):** By House Committee on Environmental Affairs (originally sponsored by Representatives Miller, Fraser, Rust, Valle, Roland, Winsley and Dorn; by request of Department of Health).

**Brief History:**

Reported by House Committee on:  
Environmental Affairs, February 22, 1991, DPS;  
Passed House, March 12, 1991, 96-0;  
Amended by Senate;  
House concurred;  
Passed Legislature, 94-0.

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**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON  
ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS**

**Majority Report:** *That Substitute House Bill No. 1710 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.*  
Signed by 11 members: Representatives Rust, Chair; Valle, Vice Chair; Horn, Ranking Minority Member; Edmondson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bray; Brekke; G. Fisher; Neher; Pruitt; D. Sommers; and Sprenkle.

**Staff:** Harry Reinert (786-7110).

**Background:** Washington State law defines a public water system as any water system having two or more connections. There are over 12,500 public water systems in the state. Over 11,500 of these systems have fewer than 100 connections.

Congress amended the federal Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) in 1986. The Department of Health has been designated by the Environmental Protection Agency to enforce the SDWA in Washington State. The SDWA increases the number of contaminants that must be tested for and imposes additional monitoring and treatment requirements on public water systems.

The SDWA defines a public water system as any system which has at least 15 service connections or which regularly serves at least 25 individuals.

Washington law currently requires a public water system to have a certified operator if it has at least 100 connections or if it uses a surface water supply that must be filtered and serves at least 25 individuals.

The secretary of health shall categorize water systems based on size and physical conditions of the water plant and water source to determine skills and experience required for operator certification.

**Summary of Bill:** A public water system does not include a water system with four or fewer residential connections on a farm. A public water system must have a certified operator if it has at least 100 connections, regardless of the water source, or if it has 15 connections or an average of 25 individuals and it uses surface water or ground water under the influence of surface water.

The secretary of health shall categorize water systems to assure the protection of public health, the protection of the state's water resources, and to implement the Safe Drinking Water Act. The secretary shall consider economic impacts and public health risks in making these categorizations.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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

**Testimony For:** The new federal standards for drinking water quality will require the capability of trained individuals to be responsible for drinking water systems covered by the federal law.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Witnesses:** Eric Slagle and Bill Liechty, Department of Health (pro); John Kirner, State Drinking Water Advisory Committee (pro); and Paul Parker, Washington State Association of Counties (pro).