

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1649

AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES,
APRIL 17, 1991

Brief Description: Updating municipality water discharge fees.

SPONSORS: House Committee on Environmental Affairs (originally sponsored by Representative Rust; by request of Department of Ecology and Office of Financial Management).

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Metcalf, Chairman; Oke, Vice Chairman; Conner, Owen, Snyder, and Sutherland.

Staff: Gabrielle Horner (786-7717)

Hearing Dates: March 21, 1991; April 17, 1991

BACKGROUND:

Federal and state law require the Department of Ecology to administer a point source wastewater discharge permit program to protect water quality. All entities discharging wastewater into state waters must pay a fee to obtain a discharge permit.

State law enacted by Initiative 97 (I-97) in 1988 requires the department to fully recover all eligible costs of operating the permit program. Eligible costs include the writing and processing of permits, conducting inspections, and laboratory analysis, but does not include enforcement. The department uses the collected permit fees to administer the state permit program.

I-97 limited the fees paid by municipal dischargers to five cents per month per household. In many cases the costs to administer such dischargers' permits exceed this limit. Full recovery of the costs of the program would require adding this differential to the fees paid by other dischargers.

SUMMARY:

The maximum fee paid by municipal dischargers is raised from five cents to 15 cents per month per household.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: yes

Fiscal Note: available

TESTIMONY FOR:

Raising the municipal fee cap is preferential to removing the cap, but there are concerns that industry should not be expected to subsidize municipal fees.

TESTIMONY AGAINST: None

TESTIFIED: PRO: Kris Backes, AWB; Carol Jolly, DOE; Kathleen Collins, AWB; LouAnn Houck; Jeff Parsons