

**SENATE BILL REPORT**

**SHB 1710**

**AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & UTILITIES, APRIL 5, 1991**

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

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

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS**

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & UTILITIES**

**Majority Report:** Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Thorsness, Chairman; Saling, Vice Chairman; Jesernig, Nelson, Patterson, Stratton, Sutherland, and Williams.

**Staff:** Dave Monthie (786-7198)

**Hearing Dates:** April 4, 1991; April 5, 1991

**BACKGROUND:**

Existing state law requires that each public water system with 100 or more service connections, or that has a surface water source that must be filtered and serves 25 or more connections, must have an operator certified by the Department of Health. Certificates are issued to individuals who pass a written examination, pay a fee, and otherwise meet the department's requirements. Certificates are renewable annually.

Recent amendments to the federal Safe Drinking Water Act require that each state certify the operators of federally-regulated public water systems that have a groundwater source that may become polluted from surface water. Federally regulated systems are those that have 15 or more connections or that regularly serve an average of 25 or more persons per day. The state Department of Health is required by law to enforce the federal standards on federally-regulated systems.

**SUMMARY:**

"Group A" water systems are defined to conform to the definition of federally regulated public water systems. "Public water system" is redefined to make it consistent with the definition in the state Safe Drinking Water Act. Definitions are provided for "service," "surface water," and "groundwater under the direct influence of surface water."

Certified operators are required for all Group A water systems using a surface water source or a groundwater source under the direct influence of surface water. The length of time before a person whose certificate is revoked can apply for a new one is extended from six months to one year. Technical changes are made to provide consistent use of the term "public water system" and to correct references to the Department of Health's authority.

**Appropriation:** none

**Revenue:** none

**Fiscal Note:** available

**SUMMARY OF PROPOSED SENATE AMENDMENT:**

Language is added to the definition of "group A water system" to make clear that it does not include systems with fewer than 15 connections to single-family residences, regardless of the number of people served. Water systems serving four or fewer residences on the same farm are excluded from the definition of public water system. The Secretary of Health is directed to categorize public water systems to assure protection of the public health, conserve water resources, and implement the state Safe Drinking Water Act. In implementing these laws, the secretary must take into consideration economic impacts and the degree and nature of the health risk.

**TESTIMONY FOR:** None

**TESTIMONY AGAINST:** None

**TESTIFIED:** No one