

**SENATE BILL REPORT**

**SB 5013**

**AS OF JANUARY 21, 1991**

**Brief Description:** Setting time limits for ground water removal application response.

**SPONSORS:** Senator Conner.

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & WATER RESOURCES**

**Staff:** Bob Lee (786-7404)

**Hearing Dates:** January 22, 1991

**BACKGROUND:**

Persons who wish to begin withdrawing water from ground water sources in excess of 5,000 gallons per day are required to obtain a water right from the Department of Ecology. The department's budget document estimates that they will process 1,320 water right applications this year and each of the two upcoming years of the biennium. This includes surface water and ground water permits.

The backlog of pending water right permit applications has created longer response times. Complaints have been made by citizens regarding the response time for Ecology to make decisions regarding the issuance of water right permits.

**SUMMARY:**

The Department of Ecology is required to make a decision to issue or deny water right permits for withdrawal of ground water within nine months of the date of application. The department may make temporary changes in assignments of employees to catch up on the backlog of permit applications and to meet the nine-month deadline.

**Appropriation:** none

**Revenue:** none

**Fiscal Note:** requested January 15, 1991