

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5608

AS OF FEBRUARY 22, 1991

Brief Description: Updating municipality water discharge fees.

SPONSORS: Senators McDonald, Craswell and Niemi; by request of Department of Ecology and Office of Financial Management.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES

Staff: Gabrielle Horner (786-7717)

Hearing Dates:

BACKGROUND:

Federal and state law require the Department of Ecology to administer a point source wastewater discharge permit program for the protection of state 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 Ecology to fully recover all eligible costs of operating the program. Eligible costs include writing permits and other costs associated with issuing and managing permits, but does not include enforcement. Ecology uses the collected permit fees to administer the state permit program.

Initiative 97 allows Ecology to consider the economic impact of fees on small dischargers and to provide for appropriate fee adjustments, and also limits fees paid by municipal dischargers to five cents per month per household. In many cases the costs to administer such dischargers' permits exceeds this limit. Full recovery of the costs of the program would require adding this differential to the fees paid by other dischargers.

SUMMARY:

A limit on the fee paid by municipalities for domestic wastewater facility permits is removed.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: yes

Fiscal Note: requested January 11, 1991