

**SENATE BILL REPORT**

**SB 6258**

**AS OF FEBRUARY 3, 1992**

**Brief Description:** Requiring water systems to adopt rate techniques that will promote conservation.

**SPONSORS:** Senators Talmadge and Barr

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & WATER RESOURCES**

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

**Hearing Dates:** February 4, 1992

**BACKGROUND:**

In 1989, the Legislature instructed the Department of Health, contingent upon the availability of funds, to do the following:

- (1) develop procedures and guidelines relating to water use efficiency that are to be included by local utilities in water system plans required by the Department of Health;
- (2) develop criteria encouraging the cost-effective reuse of greywater and other water recycling practices;
- (3) provide advice and technical assistance, when requested, in the development of water use efficiency plans and model rate-setting formulas.

The 1989 legislation also established standards to be incorporated in the State Building Code for plumbing fixtures.

Additions and modifications to existing state law are proposed with the objective of improving the efficiency in the way public water systems utilize water.

**SUMMARY:**

Conservation of water is defined as those practices, projects and technologies that reduce the consumption of water, reduce the loss or waste of water, improve the efficiency in the use of water or increase the recycling and reuse of water so that a water supply is made available for future or alternative uses.

In order for a city, town, county, special district, municipal or quasi-municipal corporation to receive funds from the public works assistance account for water system projects, they must be implementing a program to encourage water conservation.

By October 1, 1993, each water system is required to make a determination whether or not to adopt a rate technique that encourages water conservation. The determination is to be made after public notice and hearing. A determination whether to adopt water conserving rate structures shall be made by a water system in writing. The determination is to include a statement justifying the water system's decision.

Water systems that have over 1,000 connections and provide water for human consumption, must within 90 days of making the determination notify the Department of Health of the water systems plan for implementing any water conserving rate techniques.

The Department of Health is to provide technical assistance to water systems on the development of rate techniques including the preparation of model rate schedules and a reference manual to all water systems. The Department of Health is required to provide information to water systems on recent technological developments and system management techniques to increase water conservation.

The Department of Health is to provide leak detection and water audit assistance to water systems having less than 1,000 connections. The department is to provide assistance in analyzing unaccounted for water including illegal hookups, defective hydrants, unmetered water and leaks in the water system.

The Building Code Council is to adopt rules that require labels for identifying the specific water use for each plumbing fixtures.

Counties and cities are provided with specific authority to require the use of water efficient landscaping in local ordinances and in their comprehensive plans.

The Department of Health is required to conduct a study by January 1993 assessing the potential for wastewater and greywater reuse with an emphasis on municipal and industrial applications. The study is also to include an analysis of water reuse standards and criteria. Based upon the study, the Department of Health is to adopt standards containing water reuse standards.

By January 1997, public water systems having 15 or more connections must install source meters to measure the quantity of water entering the water system. Such systems shall also meter all individual connections and shall take and record readings from source and individual meters every two months and be reported annually to the Secretary of the Department of Health.

Public water systems serving less than 15 connections that commence operation after the effective date of this act, and individual domestic water supplies commencing use after the effective date of this act also must install meters and

periodically read meters and report annually to the Department of Health.

**Appropriation:** none

**Revenue:** none

**Fiscal Note:** none requested