

SENATE BILL REPORT

SJM 8012

AS PASSED SENATE, MARCH 20, 1991

Brief Description: Petitioning the United States state department to appeal to British Columbia to stem the flow of raw sewage into the strait of Juan de Fuca.

SPONSORS: Senators Talmadge, Conner, Metcalf, Thorsness, McMullen, Oke and Craswell.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: Do pass.

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

Staff: Atsushi Kiuchi (786-7708)

Hearing Dates: February 27, 1991

BACKGROUND:

The Strait of Juan de Fuca is a unique international waterway boundary between Canada and the United States. The Strait provides economic, social and environmental links between the Province of British Columbia and state of Washington.

The cities in the state of Washington have invested millions of dollars in protecting the water quality by upgrading to secondary treatment of their wastewater effluent before discharging it into the Strait of Juan de Fuca.

The industries in the state have similar million dollar investments in wastewater treatment facilities to protect the Strait from contamination.

In British Columbia, across the international waterway, the Victoria area municipalities discharge raw sewage containing toxic chemicals and heavy metals, into the Strait, from an estimated 230,000 residents. Current plans are to extend the sewage outfall line into the Strait, adding to the water quality concerns in Washington State.

The concerns of the state should be addressed by the International Joint Commission (IJC). The IJC advises Canada and the United States on issues involving boundary waters.

SUMMARY:

The Washington State Senate and House of Representatives, through the President of the Senate and Speaker of the House, and its Governor and to the Congress, Secretary of State and its President, petition that the United States Department of

State appeal to the Department of External Affairs of Canada, to protect the Strait of Juan de Fuca and begin efforts to cease the dumping of raw sewage into the Strait.

The Memorial calls on the State Department to request the IJC to investigate the problem in accordance with the boundary waters treaty.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: none requested

TESTIMONY FOR:

Discharging of raw, untreated sewage into the Strait of Juan de Fuca from the greater Victoria, B.C. area is detrimental to water quality and adversely affects human health and the environment. The cities and industries in the state of Washington have invested millions of dollars in wastewater treatment facilities to protect the Strait. The British Columbia municipalities should also provide the same level of protection.

TESTIMONY AGAINST:

It would be better to deal directly with the British Columbia provincial government than to go to its national government through our highest federal level. Other direct negotiations with the provincial government have produced results.

The value of secondary treatment of wastewater has not been proven technically. The decision requiring Washington cities to go to secondary treatment was a political one.

TESTIFIED: Senator Talmadge (pro); Senator McMullen (pro); Carol Jolly, Department of Ecology (con); Lincoln Loehr (con); Fred Feldman, American Oceans Campaign (pro); Bruce Wishart, Sierra Club (pro); Chris Headrick, Puget Sound Water Quality Authority (pro); Ed Thorp, Coalition for Clean Water for Bellingham Mayor Tim Douglas (pro); D. Mallard (pro); Bob Burd, EPA (pro)