

FINAL BILL REPORT

HJR 4209

Brief Description: Authorizing public money derived from the sale of stormwater or sewer services to be used in financing stormwater and sewer conservation and efficiency measures.

Sponsors: Representatives Chandler, Regala and Mulliken.

House Committee on Agriculture & Ecology
Senate Committee on Agriculture & Environment

Background: Article 8, Section 7 of the Washington Constitution generally prohibits any county, city, town, or municipal corporation from lending its credit or making a gift of public funds to any individual, association, company, or corporation. This section exempts assistance necessary for the support of the poor or infirm.

In 1979, the voters approved an amendment to the Constitution to allow local governments engaged in the sale or distribution of energy to assist homeowners in acquiring and installing equipment and material for energy conservation. This assistance was only authorized until January 1, 1990. In 1988, the voters approved an amendment to this constitutional provision to remove the sunset date for this assistance and to allow the assistance to be provided for more than residential structures. The most recent amendment to this section occurred in 1989 when the voters approved a change to allow local governments engaged in the sale or distribution of water to provide assistance for the conservation or more efficient use of water.

Recent changes in federal law have resulted in greater limits being placed upon what can be discharged into sanitary sewers. In addition, many times when there is a problem with a homeowner's sewer connection or septic system, it is the homeowner who is responsible for making the repairs. Even though these repairs can be quite costly, there is no authority for a local government to provide loans or assist people in making improvements to their stormwater or sewer services.

Summary: A constitutional amendment is submitted to the voters to allow local governments engaged in the sale or distribution of stormwater or sewer services to assist the owners of structures or equipment in financing the acquisition and installation of materials and equipment for the conservation or more efficient use of those services.

Votes on Final Passage:

House 97 0
Senate 46 1