

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## SSB 5575

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Synopsis as Enacted

**Brief Description:** Concerning small irrigation impoundments.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Natural Resources, Energy & Water (originally sponsored by Senators Parlette, Morton, Doumit, Honeyford and Hale).

**Senate Committee on Natural Resources, Energy & Water**  
**House Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources**

**Background:** Currently, persons proposing to store water in a reservoir must get a reservoir permit from the state Department of Ecology, and, if they propose to beneficially use the stored water, a "secondary permit" authorizing the beneficial use. It has been suggested that relatively small irrigation facilities should be exempt from these requirements.

**Summary:** The following irrigation facilities are exempt from reservoir and secondary use permit requirements:

- Facilities for recapturing and reusing return flows from irrigation operations serving a single farm under an existing water right, as long as the acreage irrigated is not increased beyond the acreage limit authorized under the existing water right.
- "Small irrigation impoundments," lined surface storage ponds less than ten acre feet in volume used to impound irrigation water under an existing water right. Use of the small irrigation impoundment must facilitate efficient use of water or promote compliance with an approved recovery plan for endangered or threatened species, and must not expand the number of acres irrigated or the annual consumptive quantity of water used. A small irrigation impoundment need not be lined if a licensed engineer determines that a liner is not needed to retain water and prevent ground water contamination. Water remaining at the end of an irrigation season may be carried over for use in the next season, subject to the foregoing requirements. Development and use of a small irrigation impoundment does not require a water right holder to change, transfer, or amend any existing water right to enable them to store water governed by the right.

**Votes on Final Passage:**

|        |    |   |                    |
|--------|----|---|--------------------|
| Senate | 49 | 0 |                    |
| House  | 98 | 0 | (House amended)    |
| Senate | 46 | 0 | (Senate concurred) |

**Effective:** July 27, 2003