

FINAL BILL REPORT

SSB 6575

C 214 L 04

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Concerning use classifications for irrigation district conveyance and drainage facilities.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Natural Resources, Energy & Water (originally sponsored by Senators Honeyford and Sheahan).

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

Background: The Department of Ecology designates "uses" for each water body in the state. Uses include items such as swimming, fishing, aquatic life habitat, and agricultural and domestic water supplies. Once the state has designated a use or uses for a water body, water quality standards designed to protect those uses must be adopted and enforced. If the set water quality standards are not met for the designated uses, the department must develop and implement a total maximum daily load analysis for waters.

A state may, under certain circumstances, remove or modify a water body's designated use. To receive Environmental Protection Agency approval for such a change, a supporting "use attainability analysis" must be performed.

"Use attainability analysis" is a structured scientific assessment of the factors affecting the attainment of a designated use in a water body. The assessment may include consideration of physical, chemical, biological and economic factors.

Summary: The Department of Ecology will, as resources allow, at the request of the United States Bureau of Reclamation and federal reclamation project irrigation districts, cooperatively conduct a use attainability analysis of water bodies located within the boundaries of the federal reclamation project.

Once the use attainability analysis has been completed, and if it shows that the designated uses of the water should be modified, then DOE must undertake rulemaking to remove or modify the water body's designated use.

The department's rules designating uses for water bodies within the federal reclamation project, consistent with federal laws and regulations, that support beneficial uses consistent with primary authorized project purposes of constructed storage and conveyance facilities. The rules must recognize the unique site-specific characteristics of the arid and semi-arid regions of the state of Washington where federal reclamation projects are located and recognize the need to deliver water and the associated activities necessary to operate the project's facilities.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate 49 0
House 96 0 (House amended)
Senate 46 0 (Senate concurred)

Effective: June 10, 2004