

6734

Sponsor(s): Senators Morton, Hale, Doumit, Hewitt, B. Sheldon and T. Sheldon; by request of Governor Locke

Brief Description: Creating a water rights confirmation process.

SB 6734 - DIGEST

Declares that the creation of a water rights confirmation process is critical to the economic viability of the state. The goal of this confirmation process is to provide certainty and clarity to water right holders so that the administration of the water code is more effective and expedient while ensuring that water right holders are ensured due process. This process will result in faster, simpler water right transactions, provide a clarified picture of actual water use, and provide greater certainty as to the effect of water withdrawals and diversions on stream flow levels.

Finds that the present system for determining that a water right holder has relinquished or abandoned a water right creates disincentives for using water efficiently, and greatly contributes to the uncertainty in the use of water rights and to the administration of an effective water management system.

Declares that this system should be reformed by repealing the current law of relinquishment and by reforming the law of abandonment to create a system that continues to require continuous beneficial use of water rights, but also provides certainty and flexibility of use for water right holders and state water managers.

Repeals provisions of chapter 90.14 RCW.