
**Agriculture & Natural Resources
Committee**

SB 6348

Brief Description: Protecting rural communities from the harmful impacts of interwatershed water rights transfers.

Sponsors: Senator Morton.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Department of Ecology to submit a report and policy recommendations to the Legislature on the impacts of interwatershed transfers.

Hearing Date: February 20, 2008

Staff: Jaclyn Ford (786-7339).

Background:

State law permits water rights or portions of water rights to be transferred to other uses or places if the transfer can be made without detriment or injury to existing rights. If the transfer involves surface water supplied by an irrigation district and the transferred water remains in the district, it needs be approved only by the irrigation district. Other transfers must be approved by the Department of Ecology (DOE) [RCW 90.03.380].

Summary of Bill:

The DOE will assess the impacts of interwatershed transfers and existing water sources, including snowpack and potential new water sources, in order to protect the economic and social welfare of rural communities.

To complete the report, the DOE will work with legislators, stakeholders, and tribes, as well as the local governments from the following water resource inventory areas: 43, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, and 62.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

The DOE will submit the report and policy recommendations to the Legislature by November 1, 2008.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested February 15, 2008.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.