

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1532

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Environment, Water & Energy, March 18, 2009

Title: An act relating to authorizing water-sewer districts to construct, condemn and purchase, add to, maintain, and operate systems for reclaimed water.

Brief Description: Authorizing water-sewer districts to construct, condemn and purchase, add to, maintain, and operate systems for reclaimed water.

Sponsors: House Committee on Local Government & Housing (originally sponsored by Representatives Rolfes, Chandler, Seaquist, Johnson, Upthegrove, Blake and Miloscia).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/23/09, 92-0.

Committee Activity: Environment, Water & Energy: 3/13/09, 3/18/09 [DP, DNP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT, WATER & ENERGY

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Rockefeller, Chair; Pridemore, Vice Chair; Delvin, Fraser, Hatfield, Marr and Ranker.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Honeyford, Ranking Minority Member; Holmquist and Morton.

Staff: Karen Epps (786-7424)

Background: Reclaimed water is an effluent derived from a wastewater treatment system that has been treated in order to be suitable for a beneficial use or a controlled use that otherwise would not occur. Reclaimed water may be used for a variety of nonpotable water purposes including irrigation, agricultural uses, industrial and commercial uses, stream flow augmentation, dust control, fire suppression, surface percolation, and discharge into constructed wetlands.

Water-sewer districts (districts) provide water and sewer services to incorporated and unincorporated areas. Districts are established through a petition, public hearing, and voter approval process and are each managed by a board of three or five elected commissioners who serve staggered six-year terms.

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.

District powers include the authority to purchase, construct, maintain, and supply waterworks to furnish an ample supply of water to inhabitants within and outside of the district. Districts have full authority to regulate and control the use, content, distribution, and price of the supplied water in a manner consistent with legal provisions.

District commissioners must evaluate certain water-sewer systems in order to create a general comprehensive plan. These systems include water supply systems, sewer systems, drainage systems, and street lighting systems. Before ordering any improvements or submitting to vote any propositions for incurring any indebtedness, a general comprehensive plan must be adopted by the commission for the type or types of facilities the district proposes to provide. A district may prepare a separate general comprehensive plan for each of these services or combine any of the plans into a single general comprehensive plan.

Except upon approval of both districts, a district may not provide service within an area in which that service is available from another district or is planned to be available under a general comprehensive plan of another district.

Summary of Bill: District powers include the authority to construct, condemn and purchase, add to, maintain, and operate systems of reclaimed water under the reclaimed water statutes so that water-sewer districts may provide reclaimed water for authorized uses and purposes.

Commissioners must prepare a general comprehensive plan for a reclaimed water system. The plan must provide for treatment plants for portions of the district as may be reasonably served, provide for a plan to acquire necessary land and easements, and for the acquisition or construction of facilities and systems necessary to transport the reclaimed water throughout the district. The plan must also provide a long-term financing plan for financing planned reclaimed water projects, including the creation of local improvement districts or utility local improvement districts and whether the cost and expenses will be paid from revenue or general obligation bonds.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Allowing water and sewer districts to build and operate reclaimed water systems will allow the districts to meet peak water demands. For the Silverdale water district, a reclaimed water project has to make fiscal sense. The district plans to start laying purple pipe now in preparation for the reclaimed water project they plan to build. There will be education and public involvement before the Silverdale water district builds its reclaimed water project.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Rolfes, prime sponsor; Joe Daniels, Washington State Association of Water/Sewer Districts; Marcus Hoffman, Silverdale Water District.