

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## HB 1947

---

---

As Reported by Senate Committee On:  
Agriculture & Natural Resources, March 24, 2025

**Title:** An act relating to reducing satellite management agency requirements for simple group B public water systems.

**Brief Description:** Reducing satellite management agency requirements for simple group B public water systems.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Engell, Springer, Ley, Schmick, Abell and Couture.

**Brief History:** Passed House: 3/8/25, 96-0.

**Committee Activity:** Agriculture & Natural Resources: 3/17/25, 3/24/25 [DP].

### Brief Summary of Bill

- Provides that new Group B public water systems are not required to be owned or operated by a satellite system management agency unless the water system provides fire flow, has atmospheric storage, serves ten or more service connections, or must provide treatment to meet water quality standards.

---

## SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Chapman, Chair; Krishnadasan, Vice Chair; Short, Ranking Member; Lias, Muzzall, Saldaña, Schoesler, Shewmake and Wagoner.

**Staff:** Elena Becker (786-7493)

**Background:** Public Water Systems. The Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) is the federal law that ensures the quality of drinking water supplied by public water systems serving at least 15 connections or 25 individuals. Under the SDWA, state regulatory agencies are

---

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

generally responsible for implementing drinking water standards and for direct oversight of the operation of public water systems. The Department of Health (DOH) implements Washington's drinking water program as mandated by the SDWA and state laws.

Group A and Group B Public Water Systems. State law divides public water systems into Group A and Group B systems. Group A systems are public water systems that:

- have 15 or more service connections;
- serve an average of 25 or more people per day for at least 60 days within a calendar year, regardless of the number of service connections; or
- serve 1000 or more people for two or more consecutive days.

Public water systems that do not meet the definition of a Group A public water system are Group B public water systems. Local health jurisdictions may adopt and implement their own Group B system regulations, so long as they are no less stringent than the rules set forth by DOH.

Satellite System Management Agencies. A satellite system management agency is a person or entity certified by the secretary of DOH to own or operate more than one public water system on a regional or countywide basis, without the necessity for a physical connection between such systems. State law requires these entities demonstrate financial integrity and operational capability to receive approval.

New public water systems must be owned or operated by a satellite system management agency in order to be created or approved. If a satellite management system is not available and it is determined that the new system has sufficient management and financial resources to provide safe and reliable service, the new system may be approved conditioned on future management or ownership by a satellite system management agency.

**Summary of Bill:** New Group B public water systems are not required to be owned or operated by a satellite system management agency unless the water system provides fire flow, has atmospheric storage, serves ten or more service connections, or is required to provide treatment to meet water quality standards. The local board of health may adopt more stringent satellite management system requirements.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members:** No.

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: Before 2014, Group B systems were required to maintain operational and managerial controls and test for water quality on an ongoing

basis. In that environment, it made sense to have satellite management agencies (SMAs), but in 2014 the Group B rules were revised to substantially remove those requirements, effectively eliminating the role for the SMA. Requiring an SMA effectively imposes a cost on the water system without strengthening the water quality.

Although statute does provide that the SMA requirement can be waived if an SMA is not available, in practice some SMAs in the greater Seattle area present themselves as available to serve the entire state. This makes it difficult for a water system to pursue the SMA requirement waiver, despite the fact that the SMA does not have a role for Group B systems.

This is a low-risk change. The bill only affects up to nine homes that share a water system in a low-risk environment, and the local health officer has relevant expertise if any issues arise.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Representative Andrew Engell, Prime Sponsor; Wes McCart; Jaime Bodden, WSALPHO; Matt Schanz, Northeast Tri County Health Dist.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** No one.