

RCW 90.38.005 Findings—Purpose. (1) The legislature finds that:

(a) Under present physical conditions in the Yakima river basin there is an insufficient supply of ground and surface water to satisfy the present needs of the basin, and that the general health, welfare, and safety of the people of the Yakima river basin depend upon the conservation, management, development, and optimum use of all the basin's water resources;

(b) The future competition for water among municipal, domestic, industrial, agricultural, and instream water interests in the Yakima river basin will be intensified by continued population growth, and by changes in climate and precipitation anticipated to reduce the basin's snow pack and thereby reduce the total water supply available to existing water users, instream flows, and carryover storage;

(c) To address the challenges described in this subsection, congress has enacted several bills to promote Yakima river basin water enhancement, each of which was urged for enactment by this state, the United States has completed a study of ways to provide needed waters through improvements of the federal water project presently existing in the Yakima river basin, and federal, tribal, state, and local cooperators have developed an integrated water resource management plan for improving water supply, habitat, and streamflow conditions in the Yakima river basin;

(d) As part of the Yakima river basin water enhancement project, the United States department of the interior's bureau of reclamation is now seeking funding to support implementation of the integrated water resource management plan for the Yakima river basin, which was jointly prepared by the Washington state department of ecology and the United States bureau of reclamation and published in a final programmatic environmental impact statement in March 2012;

(e) The interests of the state will be served by developing programs, in cooperation with the United States and the various water users in the basin, that increase the overall ability to manage basin waters in order to better satisfy both present and future needs for water in the Yakima river basin;

(f) The interests of the state will also be served through coordination of federal and state policies and procedures in order to develop and implement projects within the framework of the integrated water resource management plan for the Yakima river basin. The pace of integrated plan implementation over the long term depends upon adequate funding and is subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this purpose;

(g) The current real estate market provides opportunities to acquire community forestlands that are useful for protecting and enhancing watershed function at affordable prices;

(h) Although significant benefits are anticipated to result from the implementation of the Yakima integrated plan, in light of its substantial costs and the state's limited capacity to absorb them within existing resources, there is a need to identify and evaluate potential new state and local revenue sources to assist in paying the state and local share of implementation costs.

(2) It is the purpose of this chapter, consistent with these findings, to:

(a) Improve the ability of the state to work with the United States and various water users of the Yakima river basin in a program

designed to satisfy both existing rights, and other presently unmet as well as future needs of the basin;

(b) Establish legislative intent to promote timely and effective implementation of the integrated plan in the Yakima river basin, and to promote the aggressive pursuit of water supply solutions that provide concurrent benefits to both instream and out-of-stream uses in the Yakima river basin as rapidly as possible; and

(c) Take advantage of affordable real estate prices to acquire community forestlands that are useful for protecting and enhancing watershed function.

(3) The provisions of this chapter apply only to waters of the Yakima river basin. [2013 2nd sp.s. c 11 s 1; 1989 c 429 s 1.]