

ANALYSIS OF 2SSB 5536

House Agriculture & Ecology Committee
30, 1999

March

Creating a pilot project for water quality improvement in a municipal watershed affected by forest practices.

BACKGROUND:

Water quality standards are established pursuant to the state's water pollution control law (chapter 90.48 RCW). Compliance with forest practices regulations is intended to achieve compliance with water pollution control laws (RCW 90.48.420). Under law providing for the management of state trust lands, a city or town may request the Department of Natural Resources to alter its land management practices within a watershed that provides drinking water to provide water exceeding water quality standards established by the Department of Ecology (RCW 79.01.128). If those management practices result in increased costs, reduced revenues, or reduced value of public lands, the city or town requesting such alterations must compensate the department for the difference in cost between meeting the standards and exceeding the standards.

SUMMARY:

The Department of Natural Resources must initiate a pilot project in the Lake Whatcom watershed to determine what management actions could be taken to achieve water quality standards beyond those required by state law. The department must establish an advisory committee with representatives of state agencies, local governments, and citizens.

The pilot project must be completed by June 30, 2000. All timber sales within the Lake Whatcom watershed must be deferred until the pilot project is complete.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: *The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.*