

RCW 90.94.020 Authorization for new domestic groundwater withdrawals exempt from permitting with a potential impact on a closed water body and potential impairment to an instream flow—Requirements—Fees—Adoption of rules.

(1) Unless requirements are otherwise specified in the applicable rules adopted under this chapter or under chapter 90.22 or 90.54 RCW, potential impacts on a closed water body and potential impairment to an instream flow are authorized for new domestic groundwater withdrawals exempt from permitting under RCW 90.44.050 through compliance with the requirements established in this section.

(2) In the following water resource inventory areas with instream flow rules adopted by the department under chapters 90.22 and 90.54 RCW that do not explicitly regulate permit-exempt groundwater withdrawals and that have completed a watershed plan adopted under chapter 90.82 RCW, the department shall work with the initiating governments and the planning units described in chapter 90.82 RCW to review existing watershed plans to identify the potential impacts of exempt well use, identify evidence-based conservation measures, and identify projects to improve watershed health: 1 (Nooksack); 11 (Nisqually); 22 (Lower Chehalis); 23 (Upper Chehalis); 49 (Okanogan); 55 (Little Spokane); and 59 (Colville).

(3) In the water resource inventory areas listed in subsection (2) of this section, the lead agency shall invite a representative from each federally recognized Indian tribe that has a usual and accustomed harvest area within the water resource inventory area to participate as part of the planning unit.

(4) (a) In collaboration with the planning unit, the initiating governments must update the watershed plan to include recommendations for projects and actions that will measure, protect, and enhance instream resources and improve watershed functions that support the recovery of threatened and endangered salmonids. Watershed plan recommendations may include, but are not limited to, acquiring senior water rights, water conservation, water reuse, stream gaging, groundwater monitoring, and developing natural and constructed infrastructure, which includes, but is not limited to, such projects as floodplain restoration, off-channel storage, and aquifer recharge. Qualifying projects must be specifically designed to enhance streamflows and not result in negative impacts to ecological functions or critical habitat.

(b) At a minimum, the watershed plan must include those actions that the planning units determine to be necessary to offset potential impacts to instream flows associated with permit-exempt domestic water use. The highest priority recommendations must include replacing the quantity of consumptive water use during the same time as the impact and in the same basin or tributary. Lower priority projects include projects not in the same basin or tributary and projects that replace consumptive water supply impacts only during critical flow periods. The watershed plan may include projects that protect or improve instream resources without replacing the consumptive quantity of water where such projects are in addition to those actions that the planning unit determines to be necessary to offset potential consumptive impacts to instream flows associated with permit-exempt domestic water use.

(c) Prior to adoption of the updated watershed plan, the department must determine that actions identified in the watershed plan, after accounting for new projected uses of water over the

subsequent twenty years, will result in a net ecological benefit to instream resources within the water resource inventory area.

(d) The watershed plan may include:

(i) Recommendations for modification to fees established under this subsection;

(ii) Standards for water use quantities that are less than authorized under RCW 90.44.050 or more or less than authorized under subsection (5) of this section for withdrawals exempt from permitting;

(iii) Specific conservation requirements for new water users to be adopted by local or state permitting authorities; or

(iv) Other approaches to manage water resources for a water resource inventory area or a portion thereof.

(e) Any modification to fees collected under subsection (5) of this section or standards for water use quantities that are less than authorized under RCW 90.44.050 or more or less than authorized under subsection (5) of this section for withdrawals exempt from permitting may not be applied unless authorized by rules adopted under this chapter or under chapter 90.54 RCW.

(5) Until an updated watershed plan is approved and rules are adopted under this chapter or chapter 90.54 RCW, a city or county issuing a building permit under RCW 19.27.097(1)(c), or approving a subdivision under chapter 58.17 RCW in a watershed listed in subsection (2) of this section must:

(a) Record relevant restrictions or limitations associated with water supply with the property title;

(b) Collect applicable fees, as described under this section;

(c) Record the number of building permits issued under chapter 19.27 RCW or subdivision approvals issued under chapter 58.17 RCW subject to the provisions of this section;

(d) Annually transmit to the department three hundred fifty dollars of each fee collected under this subsection;

(e) Annually transmit an accounting of building permits and subdivision approvals subject to the provisions of this section to the department;

(f) Until rules have been adopted that specify otherwise, require the following measures for each new domestic use that relies on a withdrawal exempt from permitting under RCW 90.44.050:

(i) An applicant shall pay a fee of five hundred dollars to the permitting authority;

(ii) An applicant may obtain approval for a withdrawal exempt from permitting under RCW 90.44.050 for domestic use only, with a maximum annual average withdrawal of three thousand gallons per day per connection.

(6) Rules adopted under this chapter or under chapter 90.54 RCW may:

(a) Rely on watershed plan recommendations and procedures established in this section to authorize new withdrawals exempt from permitting under RCW 90.44.050 that would potentially impact a closed water body or a minimum flow or level;

(b) Rely on projects identified in the watershed plan to offset consumptive water use; and

(c) Include updates to fees based on the planning unit's determination of the costs for offsetting consumptive water use.

(7) (a) If a watershed plan that meets the requirements of this section is not adopted in water resource inventory area 1 (Nooksack) by February 1, 2019, the department must adopt rules for that water

resource inventory area that meet the requirements of this section by August 1, 2020.

(b) If a watershed plan that meets the requirements of this section is not adopted in water resource inventory area 11 (Nisqually) by February 1, 2019, the department must adopt rules for that water resource inventory area that meet the requirements of this section by August 1, 2020.

(c) The department must adopt rules that meet the requirements of this section for any of the following water resource inventory areas that do not adopt a watershed plan that meets the requirements of this section by February 1, 2021: 22 (Lower Chehalis); 23 (Upper Chehalis); 49 (Okanogan); 55 (Little Spokane); and 59 (Colville).

(8) This section only applies to new domestic groundwater withdrawals exempt from permitting under RCW 90.44.050 in the following water resource inventory areas with instream flow rules adopted under chapters 90.22 and 90.54 RCW that do not explicitly regulate permit-exempt groundwater withdrawals: 1 (Nooksack); 11 (Nisqually); 22 (Lower Chehalis); 23 (Upper Chehalis); 49 (Okanogan); 55 (Little Spokane); and 59 (Colville) and does not restrict the withdrawal of groundwater for other uses that are exempt from permitting under RCW 90.44.050. [2018 c 1 § 202.]

Intent—2018 c 1: See note following RCW 90.94.010.