

Modifying the Columbia River Basin Management Program

Overview

The Office of Columbia River (OCR) legislation request solves a number of water supply development problems by:

- Limiting permitting of Sullivan Lake water to northeastern counties. This will provide an opportunity to develop a water supply in a region that has few other options.
- Amending RCW 90.90 to allow water supply development efforts to be conducted more efficiently.

Sullivan Lake Reoperation

The proposed legislation would limit the issuance of out-of-stream permits from Sullivan Lake releases to applicants in Ferry, Pend Oreille, Douglas, Okanogan, Stevens, and Lincoln Counties where few other water development opportunities exist.

Changes to RCW 90.90

Expanded Cost Recovery Authority - Currently, OCR has limited cost recovery authority. For example, OCR can recover operation and maintenance costs associated with federal water service contracts, but not other costs. Additionally, because of Office of Financial Management (OFM) accounting rules, OCR is unable to deposit monies received from cost reimbursements into the Columbia River Basin Water Supply Development Account. Without a new cost-recovery feature, public investments are not maximized because beneficiaries of the water are not paying their fair share of the costs of developing a project.

The proposed legislation would allow OCR to enter into water service contracts for cost recovery and revenue sharing for water supply projects. It would also amend RCW 90.90 to

WHY IT MATTERS

The changes made by the proposed legislation will allow water supply development to be conducted much more efficiently and ensure that water supplies are developed when and where they are most needed.

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create new capital funding accounts consistent with OFM accounting rules for water supply projects.

Expanded Pump Exchange Authority - Although pump exchange projects provide *storage-like benefits*, including instream and out-of-stream uses and the use of major tributaries as sources of water for smaller tributaries, they are currently funded from the one-third “other than storage” portion of the Columbia River Account. OCR investments in pump exchange projects like the Walla Walla (\$40 million) and Red Mountain AVA/Yakima River (\$10.5 million), as well as potential new pump exchange investments on the Wenatchee and Colville Rivers, will disproportionately consume that portion of the Account. This misaligned investment scheme prevents other investments like conservation projects, providing surface water to the Odessa Subarea, etc. from being fully developed.

The proposed legislation would modify the funding authority to allow pump exchanges to be funded out of the storage portion (two-thirds) of the Account.

More information

For more details, please contact Derek Sandison: 509-952-9402, dsan461@ecy.wa.gov .