



Removing the Fee Cap on Municipal Sewage Treatment Plant Permits



SUPPORT/ VOTE YES

SB 5585

An act relating to setting domestic wastewater discharge fees

By **Senators** Das and Rolfes; by request of the Department of Ecology

The Problem:



The Department of Ecology develops wastewater discharge permits to control pollution pursuant to the Clean Water Act and state law. WA RCW § 90.48.465 includes a fee cap for municipal sewage treatment plant permits. Fees fund the administration of the permits. Over 200 municipal wastewater permits in the state have expired and their review is backlogged. Due to population growth, wastewater treatment facilities in the Puget Sound are exceeding their permit limits and polluting. The Department is currently experiencing a \$2 million gap each year.

How the Bill Would Address the Problem.

The Department of Ecology is requesting to remove the fee cap, as they are currently underfunded and unable to process permits in a timely manner. To determine the new rates, Ecology will consult with stakeholders and permittees to set new rules. These rules will be reviewed and updated every two years with the opportunity for public feedback. Removing the cap and increasing fees will allow Ecology to hire new staff needed to update permits and implement clean water protections, as well as implement future clean water requirements. Eliminating the cap will thus help better protect Washington's waters and the multitude of species that live here from sewage pollution.

Act Now: Support SB 5585. Vote yes on protecting our waters from sewage pollution.