

SENATE RULES COMMITTEE

SB 518

Office of Senate Floor Analyses

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UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Bill No: SB 518
Author: Lowenthal (D)
Amended: 6/21/10
Vote: 21

ALL PRIOR VOTES NOT RELEVANT

SENATE TRANSPORTATION & HOUSING COMMITTEE: 9-0, 8/10/10
AYES: Lowenthal, Huff, Ashburn, DeSaulnier, Harman, Kehoe, Pavley,
Simitian, Wolk

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 71-0, 8/5/10 (Consent) - See last page for vote

SUBJECT: Building standards: graywater

SOURCE: Author

DIGEST: This bill requires the California Building Standards Commission to adopt, as specified, non-residential building standards for graywater systems for indoor and outdoor use.

Assembly Amendments delete the prior version of the bill, which provided incentives to cities and counties to adopt measures that reduce or eliminate subsidies for parking, and instead add the current language.

ANALYSIS:

Existing law:

1. Defines graywater as untreated wastewater, uncontaminated by toilet discharge or an unhealthy bodily waste, which is not a threat from

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unhealthful processing, manufacturing or operating wastes. Graywater includes wastewater from bathtubs, showers, bathroom washbasins, clothes washers, and laundry tubs. Graywater excludes kitchen sink or dishwasher wastewater.

2. Requires the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) to propose adoption, amendment, or repeal of building standards to the BSC. Authorizes BSC to approve and adopt building standards. Requires that every three years a building standards rulemaking is undertaken to revise and update the California Building Standards Code.
3. Requires HCD to adopt and submit to the BSC for approval building standards for the construction, installation, and alteration of graywater systems for indoor and outdoor use in residential occupancies.

This bill:

1. Requires the BSC, at its next triennial building standards rule-making cycle commencing on or after January 1, 2011, to establish nonresidential building standards for the construction, installation, and alteration of graywater systems, as defined, for both indoor and outdoor uses.
2. Provides that the BSC shall establish the graywater standards based on:
 - A. The protection of water quality in accordance with state and federal water quality laws.
 - B. The use of existing building standards for graywater construction and installations.
 - C. The impacts of graywater use on human health.
 - D. The effects of the use of graywater for irrigation on soil and ground water quality.
 - E. The use and regulation of graywater in other jurisdictions.
 - F. Building standards on Chapter 16 of the Uniform Plumbing Code adopted by the International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials.

3. Authorizes BSC to revise and update these standards at any time.
4. Provides that, when BSC approves the standards, the existing authority of the Department of Water Resources (DWR) to adopt and update non-residential graywater systems standards is terminated.

Background

Graywater. Water provided to homes and businesses meets national primary drinking water standards. However, many of the applications for water use in urban environments (e.g., flushing toilets, cleaning, firefighting, irrigation, etc.) do not pose the same types of exposure as direct ingestion of drinking water. Recovering graywater provides an opportunity to utilize an alternative water source for non-potable applications, thereby preserving water resources for other applications while decreasing the amount of energy used to treat both drinking water and wastewater and to convey water from sources to users and back to treatment facilities. However, ongoing uncertainties about health risks, ecological protection, and the appropriate regulatory framework for protecting public health have posed barriers to implementation in California.

Graywater vs. recycled water. Existing law defines “graywater” as “untreated wastewater which has not been contaminated by any toilet discharge and does not present a threat from contamination by unhealthful processing, manufacturing, or operating wastes. Graywater includes wastewater from bathtubs, showers, bathroom washbasins, clothes washing machines, and laundry tubs but does not include wastewater from kitchen sinks or dishwashers.” (Section 14876 of the Water Code)

Recycled water, by contrast, is waste water from all sources that is treated at a waste water treatment plant so as to achieve standards established by the Department of Health Services. (Section 13521 of the Water Code)

FISCAL EFFECT: Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: Yes Local: No

SUPPORT: (Verified 8/5/10)

California Building Industry Association
California Business Properties Association
California Chamber of Commerce

California Municipal Utilities Association
Environmental Justice Coalition for Water
Natural Resources Defense Council
Plumbing-Heating-Cooling Contractors of California
Winnemem Wintu Tribe

ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT: According to the author, this bill addresses the need for additional water resources, specifically, “as water shortages grow more frequent and severe, it is imperative that the state promote the re-use of graywater wherever possible. Now that the state has established graywater standards for residential uses, it is time to take the next step to promote graywater re-use in non-residential occupancies”.

ASSEMBLY FLOOR:

AYES: Adams, Ammiano, Anderson, Arambula, Bass, Beall, Bill Berryhill, Tom Berryhill, Block, Blumenfield, Bradford, Brownley, Buchanan, Caballero, Charles Calderon, Carter, Chesbro, Conway, Cook, Coto, De La Torre, De Leon, DeVore, Eng, Evans, Feuer, Fong, Fuentes, Fuller, Gaines, Galgiani, Garrick, Gatto, Gilmore, Hagman, Hall, Harkey, Hayashi, Hernandez, Huber, Huffman, Jeffries, Jones, Knight, Logue, Bonnie Lowenthal, Ma, Mendoza, Miller, Monning, Nava, Nestande, Niello, Nielsen, Norby, Portantino, Ruskin, Salas, Saldana, Silva, Skinner, Solorio, Audra Strickland, Swanson, Torlakson, Torres, Torrico, Tran, Villines, Yamada, John A. Perez

NO VOTE RECORDED: Blakeslee, Davis, Fletcher, Furutani, Hill, Lieu, V. Manuel Perez, Smyth, Vacancy

JJA:mw 8/10/10 Senate Floor Analyses

SUPPORT/OPPOSITION: SEE ABOVE

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