

2019 LEGISLATIVE UPDATE: WATER RESOURCES



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Overview

- **Wednesday, March 13:**
Cutoff in House of Origin
- **Bills:**
 - SHB 1013 and 2SSB 5352 (Walla Walla)
 - SHB 1622 (Drought preparedness and response)



Walla Walla Partnership

SHB 1013, 2SSB 5352

- Extends the Walla Walla Pilot Water Management program through June 30, 2021.
- During the “transition period”, the following must occur:
 - Performance and financial audits;
 - Continuation of the Walla Walla basin flow enhancement study;
 - Development of a 30 year integrated water resource management strategic plan;
 - Report to the legislature (due Nov 30, 2020).

Drought Preparedness and Response

SHB 1622



Modernizing our drought statutes to effectively prepare for and respond to drought emergencies.

Drought – Streamlining our Response

Communication: Authorizes Ecology to issue a “drought advisory” warning.

- Removes the requirement to publish notice of a drought emergency in local newspapers.

Funding: Removes outdated financial accounts and updates current ones.

- Updates the emergency grant program to reflect current practices (addresses flexibility for projects, cash match, eligible entities, and loans).

Emergency permits: Authorizes Ecology to recover the costs of mitigation obtained for emergency water right permits.

Contingency planning: Authorizes Ecology to engage in planning outside of a drought emergency.

Drought – Building Resiliency

Preparedness projects:

Authorizes Ecology to fund drought projects outside of a drought emergency.

Long-term water right leases:

Establishes a pilot program to investigate the use of long-term water right leases as a drought preparedness strategy.

