

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SJR 8202

---

As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Ways & Mean, March 2, 1995

**Brief Description:** Amending the Constitution to authorize the state to collect property tax for the purpose of funding state fire protection services.

**Sponsors:** Senators Haugen, Winsley, Drew, Sheldon and C. Anderson.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Ways & Means: 2/1/95, 3/2/95 [DPS].

---

### SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Joint Resolution No. 8202 be substituted therefor, and the substitute joint resolution do pass.

Signed by Senators Rinehart, Chair; Loveland, Vice Chair; Bauer, Drew, Fraser, Hargrove, Hochstatter, Long, Moyer, Pelz, Sheldon, Snyder, Spanel, Sutherland, Winsley and Wojahn.

**Staff:** Terry Wilson (786-7715)

**Background:** The Constitution limits the amount of property taxes that may be imposed on an individual parcel of property without voter approval to 1 percent of its true and fair value, or \$10 per \$1,000 of assessed value. Taxes imposed under the 1 percent limit are termed "regular" levies.

The 1 percent limit may be exceeded if approved by 60 percent of the voters voting on the proposition, provided the "yes" vote at least equals 24 percent of the number of votes cast in the last general election. For levies for capital purposes, the number of voters voting must at least equal 40 percent of the number of voters voting in the taxing district in the last general election. Voter-approved property taxes are termed "special" or "excess" levies. These levies are approved in terms of total dollars and are generally for one year only but can be for two to six years with respect to school districts and as many as 30 years with respect to bond retirement levies.

**Summary of Substitute Bill:** A state levy is authorized for the purpose of funding state fire protection services in an amount not to exceed two cents per thousand dollars of assessed value per year. The Legislature must exempt timberlands, but not the structures on the land, from the fire protection levy if the timberlands are subject to a monetary assessment for fire protection. The levy is in excess of the 1 percent limit, but no voter approval is required.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:** The original bill was not considered.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date:** The amendment is effective 30 days after approval by the voters.

**Testimony For:** Money is needed to support training of fire fighters. The state budget has been cut by 73 percent for fire service training. Arson is on the increase. We need a mechanism to fund fire investigations.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** Senator Haugen, prime sponsor (pro); Senator Winsley, sponsor (pro); John Errenreich, WA Forest Protection Association (pro); Pete Spiller, Fire Districts (pro); Gordon Walgren, Fire Chiefs (pro).