

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5478

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Government Operations & Elections, March 4, 2003

**Title:** An act relating to the surcharge for preservation of historical documents.

**Brief Description:** Increasing the surcharge for the preservation of historical documents.

**Sponsors:** Senators Shin, Winsley and Schmidt.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Government Operations & Elections: 2/19/03, 3/4/03 [DPS].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ELECTIONS

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5478 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Roach, Chair; Stevens, Vice Chair; Fairley, Horn, Kastama, McCaslin and Reardon.

**Staff:** Ronda Larson (786-7429)

**Background:** Many old documents recorded or filed with county auditors are deteriorating due to age and environmental degradation. To fund historical preservation of documents, the county auditors are authorized to impose a \$2 surcharge for each document filed with the county auditor.

Half of this surcharge is retained by the county for the ongoing preservation of historical documents filed with the auditor.

The county sends the other half of this surcharge to the State Treasurer. The treasurer distributes these receipts monthly to the 39 counties by a formula dependent on county population. The counties use the money for document preservation in all county offices.

**Summary of Substitute Bill:** The \$2 surcharge per document for historical preservation is raised to a \$3 surcharge per document.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:** The original bill increased the surcharge to \$5. The substitute increases it to \$3.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Testimony For:** Records mean a lot. The current surcharge of \$2 is not able to cover the costs of storing and preserving the records that the county is statutorily obligated to preserve. Superior court records must be kept forever and they account for over 1 million document filings per year. In large counties such as King and Snohomish, 1,500 documents are filed per day. The history of our counties is in these documents.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** Senator Shin, prime sponsor; Bob Terwilliger, Snohomish County Auditor; Betty Gould, Thurston County Clerk.