

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SHB 1122

As Passed Legislature

Title: An act relating to parks.

Brief Description: Changing provisions relating to excess levies in park and recreation districts and service areas.

Sponsors: House Committee on Local Government (originally sponsored by Representatives Pruitt, Schmidt, Zellinsky, H. Myers, B. Thomas, Dunshee, Valle, R. Meyers, Basich, Brough and Quall).

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Local Government, February 1, 1994, DP;
Revenue, February 8, 1994, DP;
Passed House, February 12, 1994, 91-2.
Amended by Senate;
House concurred;
Passed Legislature, March 5, 1994, 96-0.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 11 members:
Representatives H. Myers, Chair; Springer, Vice Chair;
Edmondson, Ranking Minority Member; Reams, Assistant Ranking
Minority Member; Dunshee; R. Fisher; Horn; Moak; Rayburn;
Van Luven and Zellinsky.

Staff: Steve Lundin (786-7127).

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON REVENUE

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 15 members:
Representatives G. Fisher, Chair; Holm, Vice Chair; Foreman,
Ranking Minority Member; Fuhrman, Assistant Ranking Minority
Member; Anderson; Brown; Caver; Cothorn; Leonard; Romero;
Rust; Talcott; Thibaudeau; Van Luven and Wang.

Staff: Rick Peterson (786-7150).

Background:

A. Property tax levies.

Regular property tax levies are property taxes subject to the constitutional one percent limitation on cumulative property taxes that may be imposed on any property. Statutes permit most regular property tax levies to be imposed without voter approval, although a few regular property tax levies may be imposed only if authorized by voters.

Excess property tax levies are property tax levies that are imposed above, or in excess of, the constitutional one percent limitation on cumulative regular property tax levies. Except for non-voter approved tax levies by port districts and public utility districts, all excess levies must be approved by voters by a 60 percent affirmative vote, with a 40 percent validation requirement.

B. Park and recreation districts.

A park and recreation district is a special district authorized to provide park and recreation improvements. The governing body of a park and recreation district is a directly-elected five-member board of commissioners.

Park and recreation districts are taxing districts authorized to impose voter-approved excess property tax levies, as well as voter-approved regular property tax levies. Regular property tax levies may be authorized at a rate of up to 15 cents per \$1,000 of assessed valuation each year for five consecutive years. The ballot proposition authorizing these regular levies must be approved by a 60 percent vote with a 40 percent validation requirement even though these are not excess levies.

C. Park and recreation service areas.

A park and recreation service area is a special district authorized to provide park and recreation improvements and facilities. The county legislative authority of the county in which a service area is located acts in an ex officio capacity as the governing body of a service area.

Service areas are taxing districts authorized to impose voter-approved excess levies, as well as voter-approved regular property tax levies. Regular property tax levies may be authorized at a rate of 15 cents per \$1,000 of assessed valuation each year for six consecutive years. The ballot proposition authorizing these regular levies must be approved by a 60 percent vote with a 40 percent validation requirement even though these are not excess levies.

Summary of Bill: Statutes are clarified that a park and recreation district or park and recreation service area may impose more than one excess levy if authorized by voters.

Voter-approved regular property tax levies of park and recreation districts and park and recreation service areas are altered to increase the maximum annual rate from 15 cents to 60 cents per \$1,000 of assessed valuation. The number of years that voters may authorize a park and recreation district to impose its regular levies is increased by one year to a total of six years.

Fiscal Note: Requested February 8, 1994.

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

Testimony For: (Local Government) This provides a more secure source of funding and reduces administrative expenses. The current 15 cent levy is not sufficient to fund many park operations. Districts now go out for single year excess levies once every two years that are sufficient to finance their activities. The vote on the regular levies is the same as for an excess levy. This is the lowest status regular property tax levy and is eliminated under levy prorationing before any other tax levies are reduced or eliminated.

(Revenue) None.

Testimony Against: (Local Government) None.

(Revenue) None.

Witnesses: (Local Government) Representative Wes Pruitt, prime sponsor; and Mike Ryherd, Evergreen Alliance.

(Revenue) None.