

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 5684

As Reported By House Committee On:
Government Administration

Title: An act relating to prescribing procedures for decreasing fire protection district commissioners.

Brief Description: Prescribing procedures for decreasing fire protection district commissioners.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Government Operations (originally sponsored by Senators Horn, Haugen and Wood).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Government Administration: 3/26/97 [DP].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives D. Schmidt, Chairman; D. Sommers, Vice Chairman; Scott, Ranking Minority Member; Gardner, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Doumit; Dunn; Dunshee; Murray; Reams; Smith; L. Thomas; Wensman and Wolfe.

Staff: Bronwyn Mauldin (786-7127).

Background: Every fire protection district is managed by a three or five-member board of elected commissioners. The board of commissioners manages and conducts the business affairs of the district, including executing contracts and adopting rules to govern the district. Fire commissioners may be elected by commissioner district or at-large.

Every fire protection district maintaining a fire department that consists wholly of full-time, fully-paid personnel must be managed by a board of five fire commissioners.

All other fire protection district boards must be made up of three commissioners initially, but may expand to five commissioners under certain circumstances.

Summary of Bill: Most fire protection district boards made up of five commissioners may be decreased to three commissioners if the electorate of the district approves such a decrease in a special election. A special election must be called if the board of commissioners passes a resolution calling for the decrease, or if the board is presented with a petition signed by 10 percent of the registered voters residing in the district calling for a decrease.

If the fire protection district board that would be decreased by the election has commissioner districts, the board must pass a resolution to either redistrict to three districts, or to eliminate commissioner districts, prior to the special election.

Boards of commissioners of fire protection districts maintaining a fire department that consists wholly of full-time, fully-paid personnel are not subject to this procedure and may not be decreased to three commissioners.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: There are a few five-member fire protection districts in the state that have decreased in size recently due to city annexations, but no procedure currently exists to decrease the size of their boards of commissioners.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Roger Ferris, Washington Fire Commissioners Association.