

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## SSB 5853

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**As Reported By House Committee On:**  
Government Administration

**Title:** An act relating to fire protection district finance officers.

**Brief Description:** Authorizing larger fire protection districts to issue warrants for payment of obligations.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Government Operations (originally sponsored by Senators Goings, McCaslin, Haugen, Winsley and Rasmussen).

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Government Administration: 2/18/98 [DP].

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION

**Majority Report:** Do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives D. Schmidt, Chairman; D. Sommers, Vice Chairman; Scott, Ranking Minority Member; Doumit; Dunn; Dunshee; Murray; L. Thomas; Wensman and Wolfe.

**Staff:** Caroleen Dineen (786-7156).

**Background:** The county treasurer serves as the financial agent of a fire protection district(s) located within the county's boundaries. The county treasurer receives and disburses fire protection district revenues and maintains specified funds, including expense, reserve and improvement funds, for the district.

The county treasurer is required to disburse fire protection district funds on warrants issued by the county auditor on vouchers approved by the board of fire protection district commissioners. The county treasurer submits monthly reports identifying receipts and disbursement of district funds to the fire protection district secretary.

**Summary of Bill:** Certain fire protection districts may adopt by resolution a policy to issue their own warrants. The authorization is granted only to fire protection districts with annual operating budgets of at least \$5 million per year for the preceding three years.

The district secretary of a qualifying fire protection district may issue warrants. The board of fire protection district commissioners may issue one general certificate authorizing the county treasurer to pay all of the warrants identified in the certificate.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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

**Testimony For:** This bill was requested by several local fire districts with the agreement of the county treasurers' association, county and state fire commissioners' associations and the state fire chiefs' association. Some small business owners are now reluctant to work with fire districts because of the time required to process payments through the county voucher system. Allowing larger fire districts to issue their own warrants will reduce the time required for fire districts to pay their bills.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** Senator Calvin Goings, prime sponsor; Mike Pretz, Central Pierce Fire and Rescue; and Roger Ferris, Washington Fire Commissioners Association.