

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5521

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Government Operations, March 4, 1997  
Ways & Means, March 10, 1997

**Title:** An act relating to county research services.

**Brief Description:** Authorizing a county research service.

**Sponsors:** Senator Haugen.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Government Operations: 2/28/97, 3/4/97 [DP-WM].  
Ways & Means: 3/7/97, 3/10/97 [DPS].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

**Majority Report:** Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators McCaslin, Chair; Hale, Vice Chair; Haugen, Horn, Swanson and Patterson.

**Staff:** Eugene Green (786-7405)

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5521 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators West, Chair; Strannigan, Vice Chair; Bauer, Brown, Fraser, Hochstatter, Kohl, Long, McDonald, Roach, Rossi, Snyder, Spanel, Swecker, Thibaudeau, Winsley and Zarelli.

**Staff:** Steve Jones (786-7440)

**Background:** The Municipal Research Council is a state agency that contracts to provide municipal research and services to cities and towns. The council is composed of 18 members: (1) four members are appointed by the Speaker of the House with equal representation from each of the two major political parties; (2) four members are appointed by the President of the Senate with equal representation from each of the two major political parties; (3) one member is appointed by the Governor; and (4) nine members are appointed by the board of directors of the Association of Washington Cities.

Counties do not have a similar research council.

For years the Municipal Research Council has contracted with the Municipal Research and Services Center of Washington, a private nonprofit corporation, for the provision of these services.

Money appropriated to the Municipal Research Council is diverted from state motor vehicle excise tax receipts that otherwise would be distributed to cities on a per capita basis.

One and six-tenths percent of the state motor vehicle excise tax receipts are placed into the county sales and use tax equalization account and are distributed to various counties under a distribution formula. Unused moneys are returned to the state general fund. Liquor excise taxes are distributed to counties on a per capita basis.

**Summary of Substitute Bill:** The responsibilities of the Municipal Research Council are expanded to include contracting for county research and services. The services provided to cities, towns and counties shall be in proportion to the moneys appropriated for city and town research and services and county research and services.

The county research services account is created in the state treasury. Only so much money as is appropriated for the purposes of county research is transferred to the new account.

Moneys in the county research services account may be spent only after appropriation and only to finance the costs of county research.

The number of members on the Municipal Research Council is increased from 18 to 19. Four of the legislative members are eliminated and replaced with five county-elected officials. The Governor appoints the county officials, two from nominees submitted by the board of the Washington Association of County Officials, and three from nominees submitted by the board of the Washington State Association of Counties. Council members who are appointed as legislators or local officials lose their council positions if they no longer are legislators or local officials. A council member remains on the council after his or her term expires until a successor is appointed.

Funding is provided from liquor excise tax distributions.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:** The original bill provided funding from the county sales and use tax equalization account.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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

**Testimony For:** Due in part to the Growth Management Act, counties, especially the smaller ones, are in need of research. This will allow counties to use the vast resources of the Municipal Research and Services Center. In many instances, prosecutors don't have the time or resources to answer research questions put to them by county officials.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** PRO: Rich Yukuboosky, MRSC; Bill Vogler, WSAC; Tom McBride, WAPA; Jim Justin, AWC; Scott Wells, CTED.