

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5853

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Government Operations, January 27, 1998

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

Brief Description: Providing for fire protection district finance officers.

Sponsors: Senators Goings, McCaslin, Haugen, Winsley and Rasmussen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Government Operations: 1/16/98, 1/27/98 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5853 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

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

Staff: Diane Smith (786-7410)

Background: The county treasurer acts as the financial officer of the fire protection districts, or the largest portion of the fire protection district, lying within its boundaries. The county treasurer receives and disburses revenues, collects taxes and assessments for the benefit of the district and credits district revenues to the proper fund. The county auditor issues the warrants on vouchers approved by the board of commissioners and the district secretary.

Some fire protection districts protect properties with assessed values exceeding \$1 billion and employ full-time professional, secretarial and administrative staff. The annual district operating budgets of five fire protection districts exceed \$5 million. Their financial affairs can be complex.

Summary of Substitute Bill: Fire protection districts with annual budgets of \$5 million or more are permitted to adopt a policy for issuing warrants to satisfy the claims or other obligations of the district. The county treasurer retains the obligation of redeeming the warrants.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The original bill designated checks to be the method of payment, required designation of a full-time financial officer who had to be bonded, and applied to districts with annual budgets of \$1,000,000 or more.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: This bill increases the efficiency of fire districts by allowing them to shop for sales, receive quick-payment discounts, prevent late charges and react appropriately in emergencies. It also greatly reduces the redundancy of paperwork. The larger districts are urban in nature and capable of administering this warrant system. Warrants are tax anticipation notes and are more efficient and cost effective for managing cash flow.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Michael Pretz, Kathy Taylor, Central Pierce Fire & Rescue; Rose Bowman, Lewis County Treasurer; Robin Hunt, Thurston County Treasurer.