

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 6357

As Passed Senate, February 11, 2000

Title: An act relating to funding the municipal research council.

Brief Description: Funding the municipal research council.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on State & Local Government (originally sponsored by Senators Patterson, Horn, Haugen, Honeyford, Loveland, Winsley, Kline, McCaslin, Gardner and Spanel).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: State & Local Government: 1/19/2000, 2/3/2000 [DPS].
Passed Senate, 2/11/2000, 43-1.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE & LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6357 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

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

Staff: Diane Smith (786-7410)

Background: The Municipal Research Council is a state agency composed of 23 members who hold two-year terms of office. The council contracts to provide municipal research and services to cities, towns and counties.

The funding for services provided to cities is derived from the motor vehicle excise tax. The funding for services provided to counties is derived from the liquor excise tax fund.

Loss of funding from the motor vehicle excise tax, caused by the voters' approval of Initiative 695, results in approximately an 84 percent decrease in the budget of the agency as a whole.

Summary of Bill: An account in the state treasury is created to receive monies, transfers and appropriations for city and town research services. The funding for these services is derived from excess disbursements from the liquor revolving fund.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect July 1, 2000.

Testimony For: All surveys say the cities cannot function without the council's help because they cannot afford their own legal staff. It is a wonderful service. The staff is very busy all the time especially with 400 to 500 new city officials after an election cycle. The statute is unclear in the way it refers to the role of the Association of Washington Cities.

Testimony Against: Part of the funding of the MRSC should come from dues it pays to the Association of Washington Counties and Cities. These associations have open public records noncompliance problems.

Testified: Rich Yakubousky, MRSC (pro); Victoria Lincoln, AWC (pro); Paul Telford, Reform Party (con).