

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2496

As Amended by the Senate

Title: An act relating to fire protection district property taxes.

Brief Description: Modifying fire protection district tax provisions.

Sponsors: By Representatives Dunshee and Mulliken.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Local Government & Housing: 1/30/02 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/14/02, 98-0.

Senate Amended.

Passed Senate: 3/8/02, 40-1.

Brief Summary of Bill
<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Authorizing fire protection district levies for periods not exceeding four years.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT & HOUSING

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Dunshee, Chair; Edwards, Vice Chair; Mulliken, Ranking Minority Member; Berkey, Crouse, DeBolt, Dunn, Hatfield, Kirby, Mielke and Sullivan.

Staff: Amy Wood (786-7127).

Background:

The Washington State Constitution specifies that propositions to levy additional taxes for fire protection district operating purposes must be limited to a period of one year. Article VII, section 2 of the constitution requires the Legislature to affirm this taxing authority in statute.

Local fire protection districts submit levies for initial voter consideration at either a state primary or general election, or on other election dates as provided by law. Levies may

only be for a single year. If the voters do not pass the levy request, the levy must be resubmitted.

Summary of Bill:

The bill implements HJR 4220. Fire protection districts, when specifically authorized to do so by a majority of at least three-fifths of the voters of the taxing district on the proposition (if the voter turnout equals at least 40 percent of the previous general election turnout) may levy an additional tax for a period of up to four years for general purposes and for a period of up to six years for the construction, modernization, or remodeling of facilities, as specified in the ballot proposition.

EFFECT OF SENATE AMENDMENT(S):

Makes technical changes and provides a contingent effective date of January 1, 2003, if HJR 4220 is approved by the voters at the November 2002 election.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

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

Testimony For: Currently, fire districts must submit levies every year. This is an expensive and inefficient process. Furthermore, fire districts must wait each year to learn whether their levies have passed and whether they have enough funding to continue or whether they must make budget or job cuts. Extending the levy period to four years will allow for more effective and efficient long term revenue planning and funding by the fire districts.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: (In support) Representative Dunshee, prime sponsor; Kelly Fox, Washington State Council of Fire Fighters; and Ryan Spiller, Washington Fire Commissioners Association.