

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6690

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
State & Local Government, February 6, 2002

Title: An act relating to local government utility authority.

Brief Description: Affirming the authority of cities and towns to operate fire hydrants and streetlights.

Sponsors: Senators Poulsen, Swecker, Jacobsen, Keiser and Shin.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: State & Local Government: 2/6/02 [DP, DNP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE & LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Gardner, Chair; Fairley, Vice Chair; Hale, Haugen, Keiser, Kline and Swecker.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Horn and McCaslin.

Staff: Mac Nicholson (786-7445)

Background: Some believe that cities and towns should be allowed to operate fire hydrants and streetlights as a standard part of that utility's general rate structure. The applicable laws authorizing cities and towns to operate waterworks and electricity utilities do not specifically mention fire hydrants and streetlights.

Summary of Bill: It is affirmed that cities and towns have the authority to operate fire hydrants and streetlights as part of their rate-based water and electric utilities. Fire hydrants are specifically included as a waterworks utility which a city or town can construct and maintain. Streetlights are specifically included as a utility that a city or town can construct and maintain.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: This legislation just clears up an ambiguity about maintaining streetlights and fire hydrants.

Testimony Against: This legislation is intended to circumvent state laws that protect the utility ratepayers from paying non-utility costs. Streetlights are a general government responsibility and the City of Seattle should pay for them, not utility ratepayers.

Testified: PRO: Tim Ceis, Deputy Mayor, City of Seattle; Dwight Dively, Director of Finance, City of Seattle; Stan Finkelstein, AWC; CON: Walter Williams; Rud Okeson; Arthur Lane.