

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1594

As of April 3, 2003

Title: An act relating to chief financial officers in charter counties.

Brief Description: Clarifying the role of a chief financial officer in a charter county.

Sponsors: Representatives Berkey, Haigh, Dunshee, Romero, Mielke, Benson, Ahern, Moeller, Wood, Alexander, Hinkle and Sullivan.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Government Operations & Elections: 4/4/03.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ELECTIONS

Staff: Diane Smith (786-7410)

Background: The form of government provided in state law for counties is the commission form. All noncharter counties must adopt this form of government. The board of county commissioners shares administrative and some legislative functions with other independently elected county officials, including a clerk, treasurer, sheriff, assessor, coroner, and auditor. Other independently elected county officials and court officers include the county prosecuting attorney and the judges of the county superior court.

The only method by which a county can entirely change its form of government is to adopt a "home rule" charter. Article XI, Section 4 of the State Constitution was amended in 1948 to provide the option for counties to adopt "home rule" charters to provide their own form of government. By adopting a home rule charter, county voters can provide for appointed county officers to perform county functions previously performed by independently elected officials, except the prosecuting attorney and superior court judges, and can change the names and duties of the county officers prescribed by the Constitution and the law.

Five counties have adopted home rule charters: Clallam, King, Pierce, Snohomish, and Whatcom.

Summary of Bill: Statutes relating to various duties of the county auditor are amended to specify that "chief financial officer" refers to the chief financial officer of a charter county, not a noncharter county.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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