SENATE BILL REPORT
SB 6296

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Government Operations & Elections, January 30, 2004

Title: An act relating to making technical changes to county treasurer statutes.

Brief Description: Making technical changes to county treasurer statutes.

Sponsors: Senators Roach, Fairley, Swecker and Berkey.

Brief History:
   Committee Activity: Government Operations & Elections: 1/28/04, 1/30/04 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ELECTIONS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6296 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.
   Signed by Senators Roach, Chair; Berkey, Fairley, Kastama and McCaslin.

Staff: Mac Nicholson (786-7445)

Background: The coroner must forward any unclaimed money or other property found upon a dead body to the county treasurer within 30 days. The treasurer may then sell the property (not the money) within 30 days upon reasonable public notice and place the proceeds to the credit of the county.

The county treasurer is authorized, for investment purposes, to combine the money of local governments that invest their money with the county. Amounts necessary to reimburse the treasurer's office for actual expenses incurred and the initial costs of establishing a county investment pool may be deducted.

A special permit must be issued for the movement of any mobile home or park model trailer that is assessed for purposes of property taxes. The permit is not valid until the county treasurer endorses that all property taxes which are a lien or are delinquent on the mobile home or park model trailer have been satisfied. The endorsement by the county treasurer is not required when the home or trailer is being moved between retail and sales outlets or when being moved to a disposal site by a landlord with a signed affidavit of destruction filed with the county assessor.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The coroner or medical examiner must deliver any unclaimed money found upon a dead body to the county treasurer within 30 days. Within 180 days of a death investigation, unclaimed personal property with no resale value may be disposed of by the coroner or medical examiner and all other unclaimed property must be forwarded to the applicable county agency to be sold at the next county surplus sale. Proceeds from the sale are forwarded to the county treasurer.

Investment pool fees must be used to run the pool and are used by the county treasurer as a revolving fund to defray the administrative cost without regard to budget limitations.

The county treasurer can issue a move permit to any mobile home or park model trailer owner or property owner with an abandoned mobile home or trailer who files an affidavit of destruction with the county assessor. Any outstanding taxes on the destroyed mobile home or park model trailer are removed from the tax rolls.

It is clarified that the penalty for failure or refusal to list personal property is distributed in the same manner as other property tax interest and penalties. Language relating to tax liens on personal property is amended to clear up ambiguities arising from use of the word "priority." With regards to lien foreclosures, any unclaimed excess proceeds are converted to the current expense fund if not claimed in three years.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The original bill was not considered.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: The county treasurer should not have to hold a public sale for unclaimed property found on a dead body. Generally, it is jewelry found on homeless people and not worth the cost involved in holding the sale. Language regarding investment pools and foreclosure statutes is clarified. The mobile home statute changes are reasonable and allow owners to get rid of decrepit homes and let the treasurer wipe them off the tax rolls.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Rose Bowman, Lisa Frazier, WA State Association of County Treasurers.