

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1386

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Government Operations & Elections, March 30, 2005

Title: An act relating to the surcharge for preservation of historical documents.

Brief Description: Increasing the surcharge for the preservation of historical documents.

Sponsors: Representatives Takko, Haler, Haigh, Ericks, Hankins, McCoy and Chase.

Brief History: Passed House: 3/11/05, 57-37.

Committee Activity: Government Operations & Elections: 3/21/05, 3/30/05 [DPA, DNP, w/oRec].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ELECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Kastama, Chair; Berkey, Vice Chair; Fairley, Haugen, Kline and Pridemore.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Roach, Ranking Minority Member; Benton and Mulliken.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senator McCaslin.

Staff: Mac Nicholson (786-7445)

Background: The county auditor is required to impose a surcharge of two dollars for each document recorded with the auditor. Money collected through the surcharge is used to fund ongoing preservation of historical documents as follows: fifty percent of the revenue generated from the surcharge is retained by the county; the remaining fifty percent is transmitted to the State Treasurer for distribution back to each county treasurer based on a statutory formula.

Summary of Amended Bill: The two dollar surcharge per instrument for historical preservation is increased to a five dollar surcharge per instrument. One dollar of the surcharge is deposited in the county general fund to be used at the discretion of the county commissioners to promote historical preservation or programs. For documents presented for recording by the employment security department (ESD), the surcharge will be two dollars.

Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill: The amended bill provides that one dollar of the surcharge is deposited in the general fund for the discretionary use of the county commissioners. The amended bill also provides that, for ESD instruments, the surcharge remains at two dollars.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Testimony For: The \$2 limit was set in 1989 and has not been adjusted since. The county auditor must preserve documents from all county offices, including the clerk, assessor, and commission, and the \$2 surcharge does not provide enough funds to do so. The public doesn't want to have to come down to the courthouse to examine these types of documents, rather the public wants electronic access to these documents, and the surcharge increase is necessary to meet these demands. The auditors need to "back scan" documents dating back to the mid-1800's and current budget levels do not provide adequate funding.

Testimony Against: None.

Who Testified: PRO: Representative Takko, prime sponsor; Senator Shin; Bob Terwilliger, Snohomish County Auditor; Bill Varney, Grant County Auditor; Kenneth Kunes, Grant County Clerk; Pam Daniels, Snohomish County Clerk.