SENATE BILL REPORT
SB 5070

As Passed Senate, February 25, 2005

Title: An act relating to superior court judges.

Brief Description: Creating an additional superior court position.

Sponsors: Senators Spanel, Stevens and Haugen; by request of Board For Judicial Administration.

Brief History:
Committee Activity: Judiciary: 1/26/05, 2/3/05 [DP].
Passed Senate: 2/25/05, 46-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Majority Report: Do pass.
    Signed by Senators Kline, Chair; Weinstein, Vice Chair; Johnson, Ranking Minority Member; Carrell, Esser, McCaslin, Rasmussen and Thibaudeau.

Staff: Cindy Fazio (786-7405)

Background: Skagit County has three superior court judges. Based on a workload analysis by the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), the Board for Judicial Administration has requested an additional judge for the county. The state and counties share the costs of the superior courts. Retirement benefits and one-half of the salary of a superior court judge are paid by the state. The other half of the judge's salary and all other costs associated with a judicial position, such as court facilities and support staff costs, are borne by the county.

Summary of Bill: The number of superior court judges in Skagit County is increased to four. The superior court position created by this bill is only effective if Skagit County documents its approval of the position by January 1, 2007 and agrees that it will fund the expenses of the position, including, but not limited to, court facilities.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Testimony For: The last superior court judge position was added in 1992 when the caseload was approximately 3,500. The caseload is now approximately 7,000. This bill is supported by the county commissioners and has been put into the county's budget.

Testimony Against: None.

Who Testified: PRO: Jeff Hall, AOC.