

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6484

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Ways & Means, February 7, 2006

Title: An act relating to local assistance for state narcotics task forces.

Brief Description: Providing local assistance for state narcotics task forces.

Sponsors: Senators Doumit, Swecker, Hargrove, Rasmussen, Schoesler, Morton, Keiser, Eide, Hewitt, Mulliken, Parlette and Benton.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Ways & Means: 1/30/06, 2/7/06 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Prentice, Chair; Fraser, Vice Chair, Capital Budget Chair; Doumit, Vice Chair, Operating Budget; Zarelli, Ranking Minority Member; Brandland, Fairley, Kohl-Welles, Parlette, Pridemore, Rasmussen, Regala, Roach, Rockefeller, Schoesler and Thibaudeau.

Staff: Paula Faas (786-7449)

Background: Previously, two federal grant programs, the Bryne Formula Grant Program and the Local Law Enforcement Block Grant, provided federal funding for local drug task forces. These grants were administered by the Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development (CTED). In Fiscal Year (FY) 2004, CTED allocated \$4.163 million in federal funding for local drug task forces. Since then, the federal government combined these two programs into the Justice Assistance Grant (JAG), also administered by CTED. The total amount of funding available was reduced by approximately 40 percent in FY 2006 and is projected to be reduced another 40 percent in FY 2007. The current estimate of federal funding for local drug task forces is \$2.343 million for FY 2007.

Counties may receive JAG money either by applying for funding through CTED or applying directly to the Department of Justice.

While most Washington counties have been part of a federally funded drug task force, 10 counties have not been included. They are: Columbia, Island, Jefferson, Kittitas, Klickitat, Lincoln, Mason, Pacific, Pend Oreille, San Juan, Stevens, and Walla Walla.

Summary of Bill: It is the intent of the Legislature to appropriate at least \$4 million annually for local drug task forces, including any funds provided by the federal government.

Three pilot projects are established to fund local drug task forces in three rural areas of the state. The task forces will focus on enforcement of drug laws. The northeast area includes Stevens, Ferry, Pend Oreille, and Lincoln counties. The southeast area include Asotin,

Garfield, Columbia, and Walla Walla counties. The southwest area includes Pacific, Wahkiakum, Cowlitz, Lewis, and Grays Harbor counties.

It is the intent of the Legislature to provide \$1.575 per year to fund the pilot task forces. Each task force shall receive funding to hire four deputy sheriffs, two deputy prosecutors, and a clerk to support the prosecutors. It is the intent of the Legislature to provide at least one sheriff to each county that has not previously received federal funding for drug task forces.

The Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs will administer funding to counties for the sheriffs. The Washington Prosecutors Association will administer funding to counties for the deputy prosecutors and clerks.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: Yes.

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

Testimony For: This bill will help provide a comprehensive statewide strategy for drug interdiction. It provides assistance to rural counties struggling to provide basic services regarding enforcement of drug laws.

Testimony Against: None.

Who Testified: PRO: John Didion, Pacific County Sheriff; Steve Whybark, Mason County Sheriff; Mike Whelan, Grays Harbor Sheriff; Don Pierce, Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs; Tom McBride, Washington Association of Prosecutors; Brian Martinek, Chief of Vancouver Police.