

SB 5624 - DIGEST

Declares an intent to explicitly recognize local jurisdictions' ability and authority to collect utility service charges to fund ambulance and emergency medical service systems that are based, at least in some part, upon a charge for the availability of these services. In fact, notwithstanding some of the discussion in the Washington State Supreme Court's *Arborwood Idaho LLC vs. City of Kennewick* decision, the legislature finds that reliance on a funding policy which is based only on actual use of these services would be inequitable, would lead to disproportionate impacts on sick and injured persons, and could impede the likelihood that persons would seek ambulance or emergency medical service assistance in their time of need.

Finds that without a funding mechanism, local governments would no longer be able to operate or contract for ambulance and emergency medical services, thereby threatening the health, safety, and welfare of the people.

Declares an intent to ensure and promote the health, safety, and welfare of the people by clarifying cities' and towns' authority to operate ambulance and emergency medical services as a public utility, to contract for these services, and to fix rates and charges for both the availability and the actual use of ambulance and emergency medical services.