

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 6418

As Reported by House Committee On:
Local Government & Housing

Title: An act relating to cities and towns annexed to fire protection districts.

Brief Description: Regarding cities and towns annexed to fire protection districts.

Sponsors: Senators Marr and Brown.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Local Government & Housing: 2/22/10 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Authorizes the formation of fire protection districts in any area of the state, including cities and towns.
- Deletes statutory language restricting the establishment of fire protection districts to specified areas.
- Increases the population limit for cities that can be annexed into a fire protection district from 100,000 persons or less to 300,000 persons or less.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT & HOUSING

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Simpson, Chair; Nelson, Vice Chair; Angel, Ranking Minority Member; Miloscia, Short, Springer, Upthegrove, White and Williams.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 2 members: Representatives DeBolt, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Fagan.

Staff: Thamas Osborn (786-7129).

Background:

Fire Protection Districts.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Fire protection districts (district) are created to provide fire prevention, fire suppression, and emergency medical services within a district's boundaries, which can include incorporated and unincorporated areas. The creation of such districts requires voter approval. Generally, districts serve residents outside of cities or towns, except when cities and towns have been annexed into a district or when the district continues to provide service to a newly incorporated area. The districts are governed by an elected board of commissioners consisting of either three or five members. The districts finance their activities and facilities by imposing regular property taxes, excess voter-approved property tax levies, and benefit charges.

Annexation of a City by a Fire Protection District.

A city or town adjacent to a district may be annexed to such a district provided the population of the city or town does not exceed 100,000. Such annexation is initiated through the adoption of an ordinance by the legislative authority of the city or town approving annexation into the district and stating a finding that the public interest is served by such annexation. The annexation must then be authorized through the concurrence of the district's board of fire commissioners. Following such approval of the annexation, notification must be sent to the governing body of the county or counties in which both the district and city or town are located. The pertinent county legislative authorities must then call a special election in the city or town to be annexed, as well as the district, so as to allow the voters in each jurisdiction to determine the annexation issue. The annexation is complete if a majority of voters in each jurisdiction vote in favor of annexation.

In accordance with specified limitations, both the district and the city are authorized to levy taxes related to district fire protection services.

Summary of Bill:

The act authorizes the formation of districts in any area of the state, including cities and towns. Statutory language restricting the establishment of districts to certain areas is deleted.

The act increases the population limit for cities that can be annexed into a district from 100,000 persons or less to 300,000 persons or less.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The purpose of this bill is to enhance statewide fire protection by eliminating artificial and unnecessary restrictions on where districts may be formed. Under the bill, fire protection districts can be formed in any area of the state, including within cities and towns. This will provide local jurisdictions with greater flexibility in choosing the type of fire protection agency that best suits their needs. The bill also increases the population limit for cities that may be annexed into a district.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Senator Marr, prime sponsor; and Al Aldrich, City of Spokane.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.