

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6418

As Passed Senate, February 10, 2010

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: Government Operations & Elections: 1/25/10, 1/26/10 [DP].
Passed Senate: 2/10/10, 49-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ELECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Fairley, Chair; Oemig, Vice Chair; Roach, Ranking Minority Member; McDermott, Pridemore and Swecker.

Staff: Karen Epps (786-7424)

Background: A fire protection district (district) is created to provide fire prevention, fire suppression, and emergency medical services within a district's boundaries. A district is governed by a board of commissioners consisting of either three or five members. The district finances their activities and facilities by imposing regular property taxes, excess voter-approved property tax levies, and benefit charges. Generally, a district serves 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.

A city or town adjacent to a district may be annexed into 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/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

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each jurisdiction to determine the annexation issue. The annexation is complete if a majority of voters in each jurisdiction vote in favor of annexation.

Summary of Bill: The requirement that fire protection districts be authorized in areas outside of cities and town, except where the cities and towns have been annexed into a fire protection district or where the district is continuing service, is removed. A city or town adjacent to a district may be annexed into such a district provided the population of the city or town does not exceed 300,000.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Currently, cities with populations over 100,000 can only have a municipal fire district. This bill allows cities with a population over 300,000 to annex into a fire protection district. This will still require a vote of the people. This provides more flexibility to larger cities whose citizens may be interested in annexing into a fire protection district. This allows citizens to vote on the level of service that they want for fire protection services.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Chris Marr, prime sponsor; Tom Parker, City of Spokane.