

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2639

As Passed House:

February 9, 2012

Title: An act relating to improving the function of the treasurer's office in handling advance taxes and assessments.

Brief Description: Improving the function of the treasurer's office in handling advance taxes and assessments.

Sponsors: Representative Takko.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Local Government: 1/27/12 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/9/12, 96-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Changes the document recording date specified in provisions governing anticipated tax and assessment payments for platted property from May 31 to July 31.
- Requires county treasurers to send corrected bills to property owners if the deposit for the anticipated taxes and assessments for the platted property is insufficient to cover the actual amount due.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Takko, Chair; Fitzgibbon, Vice Chair; Angel, Ranking Minority Member; Asay, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Rodne, Smith, Springer, Tharinger and Upthegrove.

Staff: Ethan Moreno (786-7386).

Background:

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.

County treasurers (treasurers) have various duties and authorities relating to the receipt, processing, and disbursement of funds. Treasurers are the custodian of the county's funds and the administrator of the county's financial transactions. In addition to their duties relating to county functions, treasurers provide financial services to special purpose districts and other units of local government. Treasurers are also responsible for the collection and receipt of taxes due counties.

Persons choosing to record specific land division actions for platted property with the county auditor after May 31 of any year and prior to the date of collection of taxes in the ensuing year, must pay a formula-based deposit to the treasurer to cover anticipated taxes and assessments for the property. Following certification of the levy rate for the property, the treasurer must use the deposit to pay taxes and assessments for the property that, based upon the date of document recording, are due. If the deposit exceeds the taxes and assessments due, the treasurer must return the excess funds to the proper person.

Summary of Bill:

The document recording date specified in provisions governing anticipated tax and assessment payments for platted property is changed from May 31 to July 31. If the deposited sum is less than the taxes and assessments due on the property, the treasurer must send the corrected bill to the current taxpayer for the remaining amount owed. The remaining amount owed must be paid in accordance with general requirements governing the payment of property taxes and assessments.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect on May 1, 2012.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This bill is an efficiency measure that seeks to assist county assessors by synchronizing the advanced tax and assessment date with the new construction date. Moving the date window forward, as proposed in the bill, will be helpful to counties, as collecting advanced taxes is becoming more challenging under the current tax collection system. The current system can create collection shortcoming for counties, but this bill clarifies that counties have the right to re-bill property owners for the full amount due.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Takko, prime sponsor; and Rose Bowman, Washington Association of County Treasurers.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.