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**Public Safety & Emergency Preparedness  
Committee**

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**HB 2647**

**Brief Description:** Increasing the authority of the forensic investigations council to assist local jurisdictions in identification of human remains.

**Sponsors:** Representative Hurst.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Allows the Washington State Forensic Investigations Council to authorize up to \$210,000 from the Death Investigations Account for the purpose of assisting local jurisdictions in the identification of human remains.

**Hearing Date:** 2/8/12

**Staff:** Sarah Koster (786-7303).

**Background:**

The Washington State Forensic Investigations Council (Council) oversees the Bureau of Forensic Laboratory Services (Bureau) and, in consultation with the Chief of the Washington State Patrol (WSP) or the Chief's designee, controls the operation and establishes policies of the Bureau. The Council is responsible for the oversight of any state forensic pathology program authorized by the Legislature. The Council is actively involved in the preparation of the Bureau budget and approves the Bureau budget prior to its formal submission to the Office of Financial Management.

The Council may do the following:

- meet at such times and places as may be designated by a majority vote of the Council members;
- adopt rules governing the Council and the conduct of its meetings;
- require reports from the Chief of the WSP on matters pertaining to the Bureau;

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- authorize the expenditure of up to \$250,000 per biennium from the Council's Death Investigations Account appropriation for the purpose of assisting local jurisdictions in the investigation of multiple deaths involving unanticipated, extraordinary, and catastrophic events, or involving multiple jurisdictions;
- authorize the expenditure of up to \$25,000 per biennium from the Council's Death Investigations Account appropriation for the purpose of assisting local jurisdictions to secure forensic anthropology services or other testing, to determine the identity of human remains; and
- do anything, necessary or convenient, which enables the Council to perform its duties and to exercise its powers.

The Council must do the following:

- prescribe qualifications for the position of Director of the Bureau, after consulting with the Chief of the WSP;
- appoint a toxicologist as State Toxicologist, after consulting with the Chief of the WSP and the Director of the Bureau;
- establish the policies, objectives, and priorities of the Bureau to be implemented and administered within constraints established by budgeted resources by the Director of the Bureau;
- set the salary for the Director of the Bureau; and
- set the salary for the State Toxicologist.

**Summary of Bill:**

House Bill 2647 expands the Council's authority to authorize expenditures from the Death Investigations Account for the purpose of assisting local jurisdictions to secure forensic anthropology services or other testing to determine the identity of human remains to allow expenditures of up to \$210,000.

The Council will contract with a county coroner or medical examiner to secure the required staff, facility storage, and equipment.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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