

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 2213

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Government Operations, Tribal Relations & Elections, February 16, 2012

Title: An act relating to modifying certain definitions for the purpose of firefighting services for unprotected lands.

Brief Description: Modifying certain definitions for the purpose of firefighting services for unprotected lands.

Sponsors: Representatives Chandler, Van De Wege and Johnson.

Brief History: Passed House: 1/30/12, 96-0.

Committee Activity: Government Operations, Tribal Relations & Elections: 2/16/12 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS, TRIBAL RELATIONS & ELECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Pridemore, Chair; Prentice, Vice Chair; Swecker, Ranking Minority Member; Chase, Nelson and Roach.

Staff: Karen Epps (786-7424)

Background: State law authorizes the creation of several types of fire protection and emergency service providers to serve cities, towns, and counties. The types of fire protection service providers include city or town fire departments, fire protection districts, and regional fire protection service authorities.

Each type of fire protection service provider operates within a specified jurisdiction, and each has the authority to tax residents for the services provided. Fire protection jurisdictions may enter into interlocal agreements among themselves to provide services outside of their jurisdictional boundaries.

Residents of every area of the state may establish a local fire protection service or a fire protection district to provide fire prevention, suppression, and emergency medical services. However, the creation of a service or district requires either a public vote or legislative action by the appropriate local government. Property owners of unprotected lands are encouraged to form or annex into a fire protection jurisdiction or enter into an agreement with a fire

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protection service agency or agencies for firefighting services. Property owners of unprotected land who choose not to form or annex into a fire protection jurisdiction do so willingly and with full knowledge that a fire protection service agency is not obligated to provide services to unprotected land.

A fire protection service agency may initiate fire protection services on unprotected land under certain circumstances. If a fire protection service agency initiates fire protection services on unprotected land, the property owner of the unprotected land must reimburse the agency for actual costs that are incurred that are proportionate to the fire itself. If the property owner fails to pay the agency for its services, the agency is entitled to pursue payment through a collection agency or court action.

Summary of Bill: Within the provision concerning firefighting services on unprotected land, the definition of improved property is modified to specify that the definition includes bridges and agricultural structures, as defined in the state building code.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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: Last year, the Legislature passed a bill on no man's land fire protection. This bill amends the definition to clarify some confusing points to ensure that fire districts are able to fight fires on the out-buildings like barns.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Dylan Doty, WA Fire Chiefs Assn.