

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 5766

As Passed Senate, February 14, 2012

Title: An act relating to fire protection district commissioners.

Brief Description: Addressing fire protection district commissioners.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Government Operations, Tribal Relations & Elections (originally sponsored by Senators Roach and Pridemore).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Government Operations, Tribal Relations & Elections: 2/17/11, 2/21/11 [DPS].

Passed Senate: 2/14/12, 47-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS, TRIBAL RELATIONS & ELECTIONS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5766 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

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

Staff: Sharon Swanson (786-7447)

Background: A fire protection district is a political subdivision of the state, typically located in an unincorporated area, with responsibility to provide fire prevention and suppression services and emergency medical response. A fire protection district has all the powers and duties of a municipal corporation, including taxation, eminent domain, and the authority to enter into contracts.

The affairs of a fire protection district are managed by a board of fire commissioners composed of three registered voters residing in the district. If the three member board determines by resolution that it is in the best interest of the district to increase the number of commissioners from three to five, or if the board is presented with a petition signed by 10 percent of the registered voters residing within the district, the board must submit a resolution to the county legislative authority, requesting that an election be held.

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.

If a simple majority of voters approve a ballot proposition authorizing the creation of commissioner districts, three commissioner districts must be created for a fire protection district, and five commissioner districts must be created for a fire protection district with five commissioners.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The board of fire commissioners for a fire protection district with an annual budget of \$10 million or more may increase the number of commissioners to seven.

The process for filling positions is enumerated in the act.

When a board of fire commissioners that has commissioner districts has been increased to seven, the board of fire commissioners must divide the fire protection district into seven commissioner districts before it appoints the additional fire commissioners.

Fire commissioner districts with seven commissioners can decrease the size of their board by resolution or by election from seven to five or five to three.

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: This is a good bill that gives flexibility to fire commissions. As populations grow, fire commissions need additional commissioners to adequately perform the functions necessary for a fire commission district commission to meet the needs of the people. Please support this bill.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Richard Kuss, East Pierce Fire & Rescue, Pierce County Fire Commissioners.