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## Local Government Committee

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### HB 1654

**Brief Description:** Establishing a regional fire protection service authority within the boundaries of a single city.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Riccelli, Ormsby, Fitzgibbon, Tarleton, Van De Wege and Ryu.

#### Brief Summary of Bill

- Authorizes regional fire protection service authorities (RFAs) to be formed within a single city rather than only within an area that is coextensive with two or more fire protection jurisdictions.
- Exempts single-city RFAs from provisions generally barring an RFA from establishing an ambulance service that would compete with an existing private ambulance service.

**Hearing Date:** 2/14/13

**Staff:** Ethan Moreno (786-7386).

#### **Background:**

##### Regional Fire Protection Service Authorities.

In 2004 the Legislature authorized the creation of regional fire protection service authorities (RFAs) as separate taxing districts charged with providing regional fire protection and emergency services within their jurisdictional boundaries. The governing body of an RFA is determined by provisions in the plan calling for its creation. Currently, seven RFAs operate in Washington.

An RFA is formed through a multi-step process that begins when elected officials from two or more adjacent fire protection jurisdictions convene a regional fire protection service authority planning committee (planning committee). Each governing body of the fire protection jurisdictions participating in the planning committee must appoint three elected officials to the committee. The planning committee, which may receive and repay state or county start-up

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funding for ordinary and necessary expenses, must formulate and adopt a regional fire protection service authority plan (plan) for the governance, design, financing, and development of fire protection and emergency services within the proposed RFA. The planning committee may dissolve itself, and any participating fire protection jurisdiction may withdraw upon providing 30 days of written notice to the other jurisdictions.

The plan or subsequently established RFA cannot provide for the establishment of an ambulance service that would compete with an existing private ambulance service unless the RFA determines that all or a substantial portion of the area served by the RFA is not adequately served by an existing private ambulance service. Provisions governing the determination of adequacy process are established in statute.

Once adopted, the plan must be forwarded to the governing bodies of the participating fire protection jurisdictions to initiate an election process. Absent financing provisions requiring 60 percent voter approval, a simple majority of the total persons voting on the ballot measure to approve the plan and establish the RFA is required for approval.

**Summary of Bill:**

Provisions governing regional fire protection service authorities (RFAs) are modified to allow an RFA to be formed within a single city rather than only within an area that is coextensive with two or more fire protection jurisdictions. A regional fire protection service authority planning committee (planning committee) is authorized to receive, and mandated to repay within one year of the RFA's establishment, start-up funding provided by affected cities for ordinary and necessary expenses. The planning committee may dissolve itself, and any participating fire protection jurisdiction may withdraw from the committee upon providing 30 days of written notice to the other participating jurisdictions, if any.

An RFA within a single city is exempted from provisions generally barring RFAs from establishing ambulance services that would compete with existing private ambulance services.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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