

FINAL BILL REPORT

SSB 5332

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Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Modifying the percentage of votes required to continue benefit charges for fire protection districts.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Governmental Operations (originally sponsored by Senators Roach, Nelson, Rolfes, Conway, Fain and Delvin).

Senate Committee on Governmental Operations
House Committee on Local Government
House Committee on Finance

Background: Fire protection districts are created to provide fire prevention, fire suppression, and emergency services within a district's boundaries. A fire protection district may be established through voter approval. A fire protection district is governed by a board of commissioners (board) composed of three, five, or seven members who are registered voters residing in the district. The board must hold regular monthly meetings and may call special meetings at any time under the Open Public Meetings Act. A fire protection district has the powers and authorities of a municipal corporation. A fire protection district may be financed by imposing regular property taxes, excess voter-approved property tax levies, and benefit charges.

A benefit charge is a type of assessment imposed upon a property owner based upon the measurable benefits to be received by the property owner from fire protection districts and fire protection authorities. A district or authority may use this funding approach as a means for apportioning the real costs of service to an individual property in a manner that reflects the actual benefits provided to that property. The imposition of a benefit charge is subject to voter approval by a 60 percent majority of the voters living within the jurisdiction of the district. Subject to the voter approval, a district has the option of imposing benefit charges in lieu of a portion of the property tax it is otherwise authorized to impose.

Summary: The continued imposition of a benefit charge is subject to voter approval by a simple majority of the voters living within the jurisdiction of the fire protection district.

Votes on Final Passage:

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| Senate | 33 | 16 |
| House | 54 | 40 |

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.

Effective: July 28, 2013.