
Local Government Committee

HB 1606

Brief Description: Establishing regional fire protection service authorities within the boundaries of regional cities.

Sponsors: Representatives McBride, Hayes, Van De Wege, Rodne, Griffey, Riccelli, Fitzgibbon and Ormsby.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Authorizes regional fire protection service authorities (RFA) to be formed within a single regional city rather than only within an area that is coextensive with two or more fire protection jurisdictions.
- Defines "regional city" as a city with not less than either 40 percent of the total population of the county in which the city is located, or 50,000 residents.

Hearing Date: 2/4/15

Staff: Ethan Moreno (786-7386).

Background:

In 2004 the Legislature authorized the creation of regional fire protection service authorities (RFA) 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. Nine RFAs currently 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 an RFA planning committee (planning committee). The governing body of each jurisdiction 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 funding for ordinary and necessary expenses, must formulate and adopt a RFA plan (plan) for the governance, design, financing, and development of fire protection and emergency services within the proposed RFA. The planning committee may

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.

dissolve itself, and any participating fire protection jurisdiction may withdraw upon providing 30 days of written notice to the other jurisdictions.

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 to approve the creation of the RFA.

Summary of Bill:

Provisions governing regional fire protection service authorities (RFA) are modified to allow an RFA to be formed within a single regional city rather than only within an area that is coextensive with two or more fire protection jurisdictions. "Regional city" is defined as a city with not less than either 40 percent of the total population of the county in which the city is located, or 50,000 residents.

Various provisions governing the creation of RFAs are modified to allow for the creation of an RFA within a single regional city, including:

- requiring the governing body of the city to appoint three elected officials to the RFA planning committee (planning committee);
- specifying that a planning committee must repay, within one year of the RFAs establishment, funding provided by specified sources, including a regional city, for ordinary and necessary initial expenses associated with the initial operation of an RFA; and
- specifying that any participating fire protection jurisdiction may withdraw from the planning committee upon providing 30 days of written notice to the other participating jurisdictions, if any.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 2, 2015.

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