

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 5122

As Passed House:
April 6, 2017

Title: An act relating to fire commissioner compensation.

Brief Description: Concerning fire commissioner compensation.

Sponsors: Senators Takko and Rivers.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Local Government: 3/14/17, 3/28/17 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 4/6/17, 96-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Changes the date that the Office of Financial Management is required to begin adjusting fire commissioners' compensation amounts for inflation to January 1, 2019.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Appleton, Chair; McBride, Vice Chair; Griffey, Ranking Minority Member; Pike, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Gregerson, Peterson and Taylor.

Staff: Yvonne Walker (786-7841).

Background:

A fire protection district (district) is a type of special purpose district, typically located in an unincorporated area, with responsibility to provide fire prevention and suppression services and emergency medical response services. A district has the powers and authorities of a municipal corporation.

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.

Generally, districts are managed by a board composed of three to seven commissioners. The number of commissioners can vary depending upon the number of commissioner districts, the number of full-time paid personnel employed at the fire department, the annual budget of a district, and whether a majority of the voters in the district have approved an increase in board membership. Commissioners are elected at-large and serve staggered six-year terms.

Each commissioner may receive up to \$104 per day for time spent in actual attendance at official meetings of the board or in performance of other services or duties on behalf of the district. Annual compensation may not exceed \$9,984. In addition, each commissioner may receive reimbursement for expenses incurred while engaged in district business.

The Office of Financial Management (OFM) must adjust the compensation amounts for inflation every five years, beginning July 1, 2008. In 2013 the OFM adjusted the amount to \$114 per day with an annual compensation limit of \$10,944. The adjustments are published in the Washington State Register, but are not reflected in statute. The next adjustment is slated to occur on July 1, 2018.

Summary of Bill:

The date that the OFM must adjust the dollar threshold for fire commissioners' compensation amounts due to inflation is changed. The OFM must adjust commissioners' compensation amounts every five years beginning on January 1, 2019 (instead of July 1, 2008).

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Special districts used to come to the Legislature every year asking to increase commissioners' compensation due to inflation. Several years ago, the law was changed to allow the OFM to adjust compensation amounts every five years. However, the July date in which the OFM provides the districts with their numbers does not fit within the budgetary year of local districts.

Generally, a fire district's budget is effective January 1. This bill will synchronize some dates, by moving the July date to January, so that fire districts can account for and budget appropriately for the upcoming year.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Senator Takko, prime sponsor; and Ryan Spiller, Washington Fire Commissioners.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.