

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5121

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Local Government, January 24, 2017
Ways & Means, February 8, 2017

Title: An act relating to fire protection district tax levies.

Brief Description: Concerning fire protection district tax levies.

Sponsors: Senators Takko, Rivers and Palumbo.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Local Government: 1/19/17, 1/24/17 [DP].
Ways & Means: 2/02/17, 2/08/17 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Authorizes fire protection districts to impose a third regular property tax levy without employing a full time employee.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Angel, Vice Chair; Palumbo and Sheldon.

Staff: Alex Fairfortune (786-7416)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Braun, Chair; Brown, Vice Chair; Rossi, Vice Chair; Honeyford, Vice Chair, Capital Budget ; Ranker, Ranking Minority Member; Rolfes, Assistant Ranking Minority Member, Operating Budget; Frockt, Assistant Ranking Minority Member, Capital Budget; Bailey, Becker, Billig, Carlyle, Conway, Darneille, Fain, Hasegawa, Keiser, Padden, Pedersen, Rivers, Schoesler, Warnick and Zeiger.

Staff: Dean Carlson (786-7305)

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.

Background: Fire protection districts (districts) are municipal corporations established to provide fire protection and emergency medical services, primarily in unincorporated areas outside of cities. Every district is authorized to impose two separate regular property tax levies, each of which cannot exceed \$0.50 per \$1,000 of assessed value. In addition, a district may impose a third regular property tax levy of up to \$0.50 per \$1,000 of assessed value if the district either:

- has one or more full time, paid employees; or
- contracts with another municipal corporation for the services of at least one full time, paid employee.

Summary of Bill: The additional employment criteria that districts must meet to impose a third regular property tax levy is removed, allowing districts without a full time, paid employee or employee service contract to impose a third levy of \$0.50 per \$1,000 of assessed value.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Local Government): PRO: This is not a new tax, it simply takes away the incentive to hire an employee that is not needed. Approximately 250 out of over 400 fire protection districts are volunteer districts without full time employees.

Persons Testifying (Local Government): PRO: Ryan Spiller, Washington Fire Commissioners.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Local Government): No one.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Ways & Means): PRO: This is an efficiency bill. This is not a new tax. To get the third \$0.50 you need to hire someone that you don't need. This was originally for some of the big urban fire districts. Things have change now where some of our smaller fire districts need this levy. This is not a tax increase; this is a tax efficiency.

Persons Testifying (Ways & Means): PRO: Senator Dean Takko, Prime Sponsor; Ryan Spiller, WA Fire Commissioners.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Ways & Means): No one.