

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## SSB 5670

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
Local Government

**Title:** An act relating to expanding the allowable powers of fire protection districts.

**Brief Description:** Expanding the allowable powers of fire protection districts.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Local Government (originally sponsored by Senators Wagoner, Palumbo, Holy, Hobbs and Honeyford).

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Local Government: 3/19/19, 3/20/19 [DPA].

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill**  
**(As Amended by Committee)**

- Authorizes fire protection districts to enter into interlocal agreements to maintain and repair vehicles and equipment owned and used by local jurisdictions.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

**Majority Report:** Do pass as amended. Signed by 5 members: Representatives Pollet, Chair; Peterson, Vice Chair; Griffey, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Goehner and Senn.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass. Signed by 1 member: Representative Kraft, Ranking Minority Member.

**Staff:** Yvonne Walker (786-7841).

**Background:**

Fire Protection Districts.

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*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.*

A fire protection district (district) is a type of special purpose district created to provide fire prevention, fire suppression, and emergency medical services within a district's boundaries, which can include incorporated and unincorporated areas.

Districts are authorized to:

- lease, operate, and provide fire and emergency medical apparatus and all other necessary facilities and equipment for the prevention and suppression of fires, the providing of emergency medical services, and the protection of life and property;
- lease, own, maintain, and operate real property for housing, repairing, and maintaining their apparatus, facilities, machinery, and equipment;
- contract with other governmental or private entities to consolidate, provide, or cooperate for fire prevention, protection, fire suppression, investigation, and emergency medical purposes;
- encourage uniformity and coordination of district operations;
- enter into contracts for life insurance for fire district personnel;
- perform building and property inspections that the district deems necessary to provide fire prevention services and pre-fire planning within the district; and
- determine the origin and cause of fires occurring within the district.

Generally, districts serve residents outside of cities or towns, except when cities and towns have been annexed into a district or when the district continues to provide service to a newly incorporated area. The districts are governed by an elected board of commissioners consisting of either three or five members.

#### Interlocal Cooperation Act.

Washington's Interlocal Cooperation Act authorizes public agencies to contract with other public agencies via interlocal agreements enabling cooperation among the agencies to perform governmental activities and deliver public services. The purpose of such agreements is to permit local governmental units to make the most efficient use of their powers by enabling them to cooperate with other localities on a basis of mutual advantage and thereby providing services and facilities in a manner and pursuant to forms of governmental organization that will accord best with geographic, economic, population and other factors influencing the needs and development of local communities. Local governments engage in a wide array of cooperative efforts with each other, state agencies, and other governmental entities, and intergovernmental cooperation can take many forms.

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#### **Summary of Amended Bill:**

A fire protection district is authorized to enter into interlocal agreements with local jurisdictions to maintain and repair vehicles and equipment owned and used exclusively by a county, city, town, school district, or other political subdivision of Washington. A district may also provide maintenance and repair of school buses.

#### **Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill:**

A provision is added to authorize fire districts to enter into interlocal agreements to maintain and repair any equipment owned and used exclusively by a local jurisdiction.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) This bill is a result of an audit of a fire protection district that had been working cooperatively with a local school district to repair vehicles for over 20 years. They were cited for performing duties outside of the scope of their authority. The audit stated that the statute lacked specific language allowing fire districts to provide services such as mechanical repairs.

The language in this bill will reinstate a program that fire districts have conducted for years with various local agencies. This is an opportunity to allow fire districts to partner with other agencies for in-kind services and provides a common sense practice that allows for good neighbors to continue helping other good neighbors.

(Opposed) None.

**Persons Testifying:** Senator Wagoner, prime sponsor; and Steve Guptill, Snohomish County Fire District 7.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.