

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 6058

As Reported by House Committee On:
Local Government

Title: An act relating to fire district health clinic services.

Brief Description: Concerning fire district health clinic services.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Local Government (originally sponsored by Senators Randall, Saldaña, Wilson, C., Hunt, Kuderer, Nguyen and Van De Wege).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Local Government: 2/26/20, 2/28/20 [DP].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Allows a fire protection district located in Pierce County and surrounded by Case Inlet, Drayton Passage, Pitt Passage, and Carr Inlet to establish or participate in the provision of health clinic services.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 6 members: Representatives Pollet, Chair; Duerr, Vice Chair; Griffey, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Appleton, Goehner and Senn.

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

Staff: Kellen Wright (786-7134).

Background:

A fire protection district is a type of special purpose district created to provide fire prevention, fire suppression, and emergency medical services within a district's boundaries. 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.

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 district has the powers and authorities of a municipal corporation and is generally managed by a board of commissioners. Districts finance their activities and facilities by imposing regular property taxes, excess voter-approved property tax levies, and benefit charges.

In addition to providing fire prevention services, fire suppression services, emergency medical services, and services for protecting life and property, the following two fire protection districts are also authorized to establish and participate in providing health clinic services: Whatcom County Fire District 5, located in Point Roberts, and South Kitsap Fire and Rescue, located in Port Orchard.

Summary of Bill:

A fire district located in Pierce County and surrounded by Case Inlet, Drayton Passage, Pitt Passage, and Carr Inlet may establish or participate in the provision of health clinic services.

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) The Key Peninsula is a geographically isolated area that struggles with access to quality healthcare. There is only one way in or out by land. There are not any public transportation options, and telehealth services are not available because of limited Internet services. There are only two medical practitioners, and one is retiring soon while the other is part time. The demographics of the Key Peninsula mean that many residents are chronically ill and require frequent care. Currently, this can mean ambulance trips to the emergency room, which can be wasteful and expensive. This bill would allow the people on the Key Peninsula to access healthcare in their community provided by someone they trust. The people on the Key Peninsula need health care services, and this would allow more services to be provided while cutting costs and improving patient outcomes. It would take advantage of the investments in fire protection service systems that the people of the Key Peninsula have made in their communities. Other healthcare options were explored but would not work. This is a narrowly crafted solution for an identified problem.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Senator Randall, prime sponsor; Dustin Morrow, Key Peninsula Fire Department; and Lisa Thatcher, Association of Washington Public Hospital Districts.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.