
Finance Committee

SSB 6415

Brief Description: Allowing a permanent fire protection district benefit charge with voter approval.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Local Government (originally sponsored by Senators Das, Van De Wege, Wellman, Takko, Wilson, C., Hunt and Billig).

<p style="text-align: center;">Brief Summary of Substitute Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Authorizes a fire protection districts and regional fire protection service authorities to impose a 10-year benefit charge or a permanent benefit charge with voter approval.
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Hearing Date: 2/27/20

Staff: Tracey O'Brien (786-7152).

Background:

Fire Districts.

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.

Fire District Benefit Charges.

A fire protection district may impose benefit charges on property within the district to finance its activities. The benefit charge is not a per-call charge and is not based on the assessed value of property. It is a fee that applies only to the structural improvements on properties according to the property use and the size of structure. There is no charge for undeveloped land.

Benefit charges may be imposed for a period of up to six years, if voters of the fire protection district approve a ballot proposition authorizing imposition of these benefit charges by at least a 60 percent majority vote.

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 may continue to impose benefit charges for another period of up to six years, if approved by a simple majority vote. A district loses the authority to impose the third \$0.50 property tax levy if it imposes benefit charges, and the benefit charge may not generate more than 60 percent of the district's operating budget.

Summary of Bill:

Fire protection districts and regional fire protection service authorities are authorized to impose a permanent benefit charge, when seeking authorization for the continued imposition of a benefit charge, with approval by at least 60 percent of the voters of the district or authority.

Fire protection districts and regional fire protection service authorities are authorized to impose a 10-year benefit charge, when seeking authorization for the continued imposition of a benefit charge, with approval by a majority of the voters of the district or authority.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 16, 2020.

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