

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5670

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As Reported by Senate Committee On:  
Local Government, February 19, 2019

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

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

**Sponsors:** Senators Wagoner, Palumbo, Holy, Hobbs and Honeyford.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Local Government: 2/14/19, 2/19/19 [DPS, w/oRec].

**Brief Summary of First Substitute Bill**

- Authorizes fire protection districts to enter into interlocal agreements to provide vehicle repair and maintenance for local jurisdictions.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5670 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Takko, Chair; Salomon, Vice Chair; Short, Ranking Member; Lovelett.

**Minority Report:** That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senator Honeyford.

**Staff:** Greg Vogel (786-7413)

**Background:** Fire Protection 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, 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;

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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.*

- 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 fire protection district operations;
- enter into contracts for life insurance for fire district personnel;
- perform building and property inspections 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.

**Summary of Bill (First Substitute):** A fire protection district is authorized to enter into interlocal agreements with local jurisdictions to maintain and repair vehicles 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.

**EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE (First Substitute):**

- Removes the provision allowing fire districts to enter into interlocal agreements to provide any ordinary maintenance and administrative services the district performs in support of its powers and purpose.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**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 on Original Bill:** *The committee recommended a different version of the bill than what was heard.* PRO: The district operates a regional apparatus maintenance facility and has done a lot of work for local governments, DNR, the state, and one small school district. Recently, the state auditor, despite this history, determined that the district lacked the authority to do this under the allowable powers of a fire district. Not having the ability to do this would put the city of Monroe in a hardship and a small school would no longer have this maintenance provided. The spirit of the Interlocal Cooperation Act is to allow local governments to do this kind of work. It saves taxpayer money and uses district money for public safety purposes.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Steve Guptill, Snohomish County Fire District #7.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** No one.