

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1159

As Reported by House Committee On:
Local Government

Title: An act relating to the number of fire protection district commissioners.

Brief Description: Concerning the number of fire protection district commissioners.

Sponsors: Representatives Berg, Bronoske, Griffey and Pollet.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Local Government: 1/20/21, 1/22/21 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Allows a fire protection district board of commissioners with five members to increase to seven members if approved by a majority of voters.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

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

Staff: Elizabeth Allison (786-7129).

Background:

Fire protection districts are established for the provision of fire prevention services, fire suppression services, and emergency medical services for the protection of life and property. Fire protection districts are formed through a petition from the residents of a proposed district, a public hearing, and three-fifths voter approval.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

The affairs of the district are managed by a board of elected fire commissioners initially composed of three commissioners. Three-member boards of commissioners may be increased from three to five or seven commissioners through a resolution or petition signed by 10 percent of voters which is submitted to the county legislative authority. After the resolution is submitted, the county legislative authority must call a special election proposing an increase from three members to five or seven members. A majority of voters must approve the increase.

Summary of Bill:

A fire protection district board of commissioners with five members may increase from five to seven members if approved by a majority of voters.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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) This bill is supported by fire commissioners. Snohomish Regional Fire and Rescue is a new district including Lake Stevens, Monroe, and former Fire District 7. When the new authority came together, the Snohomish Board of Commissioners was staffed with five commissioners. The authority would like to consider increasing the number of commissioners to seven to better serve the region, but the law does not currently permit a board of five commissioners to increase to seven. The bill corrects this oversight. Five-member boards would like some leeway in how the number of commissioners is increased. If voters approve of the increase, there is no reason to stand in their way.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Berg, prime sponsor; and Kevin O'Brien, Troy Elmore, and Jeff Schaub, Snohomish Regional Fire and Rescue.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.