

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 5338

As Passed House:
March 24, 2021

Title: An act relating to fire protection districts and education.

Brief Description: Concerning fire protection districts and education.

Sponsors: Senators Wilson, L., Randall and Rivers.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Local Government: 3/10/21, 3/12/21 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/24/21, 98-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Authorizes a fire protection district to provide training and expend resources to mitigate workplace injuries.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Pollet, Chair; Duerr, Vice Chair; Goehner, Ranking Minority Member; Griffey, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Berg, Robertson and Senn.

Staff: Elizabeth Allison (786-7129).

Background:

A fire protection district (district) is a special purpose district established to provide fire prevention, fire suppression, and emergency medical services, and for the protection of life and property within the district boundaries.

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.

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 provision 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 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.

Summary of Bill:

A fire protection district may provide training, expend resources, and enter into an interlocal agreement to mitigate injuries and reduce the level of harm and occurrence of injuries when responding to calls. The training may include worker or workplace safety, first aid, injury prevention, and reduction of industrial-related accidents.

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) The Clark County Fire District 5 has been doing safety and training courses over the last 20 years, but the auditor recently told the district it did not have statutory authority to do so. For many years a single sentence of statutory authority guided districts in what they were able to do. A decade ago, a fire protection district's duty was primarily fire suppression, but today, emergency medical services make up the majority of a district's duties. This common-sense bipartisan bill gives the district statutory authority to continue to do safety and training courses, and does not mandate that districts do the training. The bill allows them to teach first aid, address needs with workers, and allows interlocal agreements with other entities. The new language brings the authority of fire protection districts up to date. Injuries and events are more preventable when they are predictable, and the training allows districts to predict and prevent injuries. The trainings are critical to employees and they are provided at a low cost. The cost of piecemeal training would be

triple what the cost is now. The centralized training program provides consistency in training and is taught by qualified trainers. It is a benefit to the community and taxpayers.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Senator Wilson, prime sponsor; Tim Buck, City of Vancouver; and Roy Rhine, Clark County Fire District 5.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.