

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1159

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Housing & Local Government, March 16, 2021

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: Passed House: 2/3/21, 96-0.

Committee Activity: Housing & Local Government: 3/10/21, 3/16/21 [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.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING & LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Kuderer, Chair; Das, Vice Chair; Fortunato, Ranking Member; Gildon, Assistant Ranking Member; Short, Assistant Ranking Member; Cleveland, Lovelett, Salomon and Warnick.

Staff: Jeff Olsen (786-7428)

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.

The affairs of the district are managed by a board of elected fire commissioners initially

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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.

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: PRO: Fire districts are local districts close to the people they serve. This bill corrects an oversight and would allow better communication and representation due to the size and geography of larger fire districts. Snohomish Regional Fire District is a new district that includes Lake Stevens, Monroe and Fire District 7, and would like to consider increasing from five to seven commissioners.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative April Berg, Prime Sponsor; Kevin O'Brien, Snohomish Regional Fire and Rescue; Jeff Schaub, Snohomish Regional Fire and Rescue.

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