

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5565

As of January 11, 2022

Title: An act relating to allowing fire districts and regional fire authorities to carry out certain treasurer functions.

Brief Description: Allowing fire districts and regional fire authorities to carry out certain treasurer functions.

Sponsors: Senators Sheldon and Rolfes.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Housing & Local Government: 1/11/22.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Authorizes fire protection districts and regional fire authorities with more than \$10 million in annual revenues for three preceding consecutive years to designate a person with financial experience as treasurer of the district or authority.
- Provides the designated treasurer of the fire protection district and regional fire authorities the powers, responsibilities, and duties of county treasurer and county auditor with regard to the financial matters of the district.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING & LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Staff: Maggie Douglas (786-7279)

Background: Fire Protection District. 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.

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, provide 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 deemed necessary to provide fire prevention services and prefire planning within the district; and
- determine the origin and cause of fires occurring within the district.

The treasurer of the county in which all or the largest portion of any fire protection district is located is authorized to be the financial agent of the district. The county treasurer is responsible for receiving and disbursing district revenues, collecting taxes and assessments, and crediting district revenues to the proper funds.

The auditor of the county in which all or the largest portion of any fire protection district is located is responsible for issuing warrants against proper funds of the district.

Regional Fire Protection Service Authorities. Regional fire protection service authorities (RFAs) are municipal corporations created to conduct selected fire protection functions at a regional level. The boundaries of an RFA must be coextensive with two or more fire protection jurisdictions located within reasonable proximity and that has been created by a vote of the people to implement a regional fire protection service authority plan.

Summary of Bill: Fire Protection Districts. A board of fire commissioners of a fire protection district with more than \$10 million in annual revenues for three preceding consecutive years may, by resolution, designate a person with fiscal experience as the treasurer of the district.

Fire protection districts that have appointed a treasurer, other than the county treasurer of the respective district, may issue warrants against the accounts of the district using vouchers approved and signed by a majority of the district board and secretary. The designated treasurer may also pay general obligation bonds and their accrued interest, as well as submit a monthly report to the district's secretary detailing the district's fund balances and receipts and disbursements of each fund during the preceding month.

The designated treasurer assumes all powers, responsibilities, and duties and is subject to the same restrictions of a county treasurer and county auditor with regard to the financial matters of the fire protection district.

Regional Fire Protection Service Authorities. A regional fire authority with more than \$10 million in annual revenues for the three preceding consecutive years, may, by resolution, designate a person with fiscal experience as the treasurer of the authority.

The designated treasurer assumes all powers, responsibilities, and duties and is subject to the same restrictions of a county treasurer and county auditor with regard to the financial matters of the regional fire authority.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 4, 2022.

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: Many other special purpose districts, such as public utility districts (PUDs), libraries, ports, and sewer districts may appoint their own treasurer and fire districts should be afforded the same opportunity. As more fire protection districts are being consolidated into regional fire protection service authorities, it is reasonable that they appoint an individual to be their own treasurer because of the significant financial management required. Smaller fire protection districts are not impacted by this as they likely do not have the workload demand. This option is mutually beneficial for counties and fire districts and equalizes fire districts with other special purpose districts.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Tim Sheldon, Prime Sponsor; John Oliver, Central Kitsap Fire and Rescue; Timothy Maule, Central Kitsap Fire and Rescue.

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