

**RCW 43.135.031 Bills raising taxes or fees—Cost analysis—Press release—Notice of hearings—Updated analyses.** (1) For any bill introduced in either the house of representatives or the senate that raises taxes as defined by RCW 43.135.034 or increases fees, the office of financial management must expeditiously determine its cost to the taxpayers in its first ten years of imposition, must promptly and without delay report the results of its analysis by public press release via email to each member of the house of representatives, each member of the senate, the news media, and the public, and must post and maintain these releases on its website. Any ten-year cost projection must include a year-by-year breakdown. For any bill containing more than one revenue source, a ten-year cost projection for each revenue source will be included along with the bill's total ten-year cost projection. The press release shall include the names of the legislators, and their contact information, who are sponsors and cosponsors of the bill so they can provide information to, and answer questions from, the public.

(2) Any time any legislative committee schedules a public hearing on a bill that raises taxes as defined by RCW 43.135.034 or increases fees, the office of financial management must promptly and without delay report the results of its most up-to-date analysis of the bill required by subsection (1) of this section and the date, time, and location of the hearing by public press release via email to each member of the house of representatives, each member of the senate, the news media, and the public, and must post and maintain these releases on its website. The press release required by this subsection must include all the information required by subsection (1) of this section and the names of the legislators, and their contact information, who are members of the legislative committee conducting the hearing so they can provide information to, and answer questions from, the public.

(3) Each time a bill that raises taxes as defined by RCW 43.135.034 or increases fees is approved by any legislative committee or by at least a simple majority in either the house of representatives or the senate, the office of financial management must expeditiously reexamine and redetermine its ten-year cost projection due to amendment or other changes during the legislative process, must promptly and without delay report the results of its most up-to-date analysis by public press release via email to each member of the house of representatives, each member of the senate, the news media, and the public, and must post and maintain these releases on its website. Any ten-year cost projection must include a year-by-year breakdown. For any bill containing more than one revenue source, a ten-year cost projection for each revenue source will be included along with the bill's total ten-year cost projection. The press release shall include the names of the legislators, and their contact information, and how they voted on the bill so they can provide information to, and answer questions from, the public.

(4) For the purposes of this section, "names of legislators, and their contact information" includes each legislator's position (senator or representative), first name, last name, party affiliation (for example, Democrat or Republican), city or town they live in, office phone number, and office email address.

(5) For the purposes of this section, "news media" means any member of the press or media organization, including newspapers,

radio, and television, that signs up with the office of financial management to receive the public press releases by email.

(6) For the purposes of this section, "the public" means any person, group, or organization that signs up with the office of financial management to receive the public press releases by email. [2013 c 1 § 5 (Initiative Measure No. 1185, approved November 6, 2012); 2016 c 1 § 4 (Initiative Measure No. 1366, approved November 3, 2015); 2008 c 1 § 2 (Initiative Measure No. 960, approved November 6, 2007).]

**Reviser's note:** The Washington state supreme court ruled in *Lee v. State*, 185 Wn.2d 608, 374 P.3d 157 (2016) that Initiative Measure No. 1366 (chapter 1, Laws of 2016) is in violation of the single-subject rule of Article II, section 19 of the state Constitution and is therefore void in its entirety. This section is published without the amendment contained in Initiative Measure No. 1366.

**Intent—Construction—Short title—2013 c 1 (Initiative Measure No. 1185):** See notes following RCW 43.135.034.

**Findings—Intent—2008 c 1 (Initiative Measure No. 960):**

"Washington has a long history of public interest in tax increases. The people have clearly and consistently illustrated their ongoing and passionate desire to ensure that taxpayers are protected. The people find that even without raising taxes, the government consistently receives revenue growth many times higher than the rate of inflation every year. With this measure, the people intend to protect taxpayers by creating a series of accountability procedures to ensure greater legislative transparency, broader public participation, and wider agreement before state government takes more of the people's money. This measure protects taxpayers and relates to tax and fee increases imposed by state government. This measure would require publication of cost projections, information on public hearings, and legislators' sponsorship and voting records on bills increasing taxes and fees, allow either two-thirds legislative approval or voter approval for tax increases, and require advisory votes on tax increases blocked from citizen referendum.

The intent of sections 2, 3, and 4 of this act: The people want a thorough, independent analysis of any proposed increase in taxes and fees. The people find that legislators too often do not know the costs to the taxpayers for their tax and fee increases and this fiscal analysis by the office of financial management will provide better, more accessible information. The people want a user-friendly method to track the progress of bills increasing taxes and fees, finding that transparency and openness leads to more public involvement and better understanding. The people want information on public hearings and legislators' sponsorship and voting records on bills increasing taxes and fees and want easy access to contact information of legislators so the people's voice can be heard. Section 2(5) and (6) of this act are intended to provide active, engaged citizens with the opportunity to be notified of the status of bills increasing taxes and fees. Such a notification system is already being provided by the state supreme court with regard to judicial rulings. Intent of RCW 43.88A.020: The cost projection reports required by section 2 of this act will simplify and facilitate the creation of fiscal notes. The people want the office of financial management to fully comply with the cost projections and other requirements of section 2 [of this act] on bills

increasing taxes or fees before fiscal notes. Cost projections and the other information required by section 2 [of this act] are critically important for the legislature, the media, and the public to receive before fiscal notes.

The intent of section 5 of this act: The two-thirds requirement for raising taxes has been on the books since 1993 and the people find that this policy has provided the legislature with a much stronger incentive to use existing revenues more cost-effectively rather than reflexively raising taxes. The people want this policy continued and want it to be clear that tax increases inside and outside the general fund are subject to the two-thirds threshold. If the legislature cannot receive a two-thirds vote in the house of representatives and senate to raise taxes, the Constitution provides the legislature with the option of referring the tax increase to the voters for their approval or rejection at an election using a referendum bill. The people expect the legislature to respect, follow, and abide by the law, on the books for thirteen years, to not raise taxes in excess of the state expenditure limit without two-thirds legislative approval and a vote of the people. Intent of RCW 43.135.035(5): When it comes to enactment of tax increases exceeding the state expenditure limit, the legislature has, in recent years, shifted money between funds to get around the voter approval requirement for tax increases above the state expenditure limit as occurred in 2005 with sections 1607 and 1701 of Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill No. 6090. RCW 43.135.035(5) is intended to clarify the law so that the effective taxpayer protection of requiring voter approval for tax increases exceeding the state expenditure limit is not circumvented.

The intent of sections 6 through 13 of this act: Our state Constitution guarantees to the people the right of referendum. In recent years, however, the legislature has thwarted the people's constitutional right to referendum by excessive use of the emergency clause. In 2005, for example, the legislature approved five hundred twenty-three bills and declared ninety-eight of them, nearly twenty percent, "emergencies," insulating them all from the constitution's guaranteed right to referendum. The courts' reviews of emergency clauses have resulted in inconsistent decisions regarding the legality of them in individual cases. The people find that, if they are not allowed to vote on a tax increase, good public policy demands that at least the legislature should be aware of the voters' view of individual tax increases. An advisory vote of the people at least gives the legislature the views of the voters and gives the voters information about the bill increasing taxes and provides the voters with legislators' names and contact information and how they voted on the bill. The people have a right to know what is happening in Olympia. Intent of section 6(1) of this act: If the legislature blocks a citizen referendum through the use of an emergency clause or a citizen referendum on the tax increase is not certified for the next general election ballot, then an advisory vote on the tax increase is required. Intent of section 6(4) of this act: If there's a binding vote on the ballot, there's no need for a nonbinding vote.

The intent of section 14 of this act: The people want to return the authority to impose or increase fees from unelected officials at state agencies to the duly elected representatives of the legislature or to the people. The people find that fee increases should be debated openly and transparently and up-or-down votes taken by our elected representatives so the people are given the opportunity to hold them

accountable at the next election." [2008 c 1 § 1 (Initiative Measure No. 960, approved November 6, 2007).]

**Construction—2008 c 1 (Initiative Measure No. 960):** "The provisions of this act are to be liberally construed to effectuate the intent, policies, and purposes of this act." [2008 c 1 § 15 (Initiative Measure No. 960, approved November 6, 2007).]

**Severability—2008 c 1 (Initiative Measure No. 960):** "If any provision of this act or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected." [2008 c 1 § 16 (Initiative Measure No. 960, approved November 6, 2007).]

**Subheadings and part headings not law—2008 c 1 (Initiative Measure No. 960):** "Subheadings and part headings used in this act are not part of the law." [2008 c 1 § 17 (Initiative Measure No. 960, approved November 6, 2007).]

**Short title—2008 c 1 (Initiative Measure No. 960):** "This act shall be known and cited as the taxpayer protection act of 2007." [2008 c 1 § 18 (Initiative Measure No. 960, approved November 6, 2007).]

**Effective date—2008 c 1 (Initiative Measure No. 960):** "This act takes effect December 6, 2007." [2008 c 1 § 19 (Initiative Measure No. 960, approved November 6, 2007).]