

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 5369

As Reported By House Committee On:

Government Operations

Title: An act relating to merger of fire protection districts.

Brief Description: Allowing a majority vote to authorize merger of fire protection districts.

Sponsors: Senators Haugen and Winsley.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Government Operations: 3/24/95, 3/29/95 [DP].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Reams, Chairman; Goldsmith, Vice Chairman; Rust, Ranking Minority Member; Scott, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Chopp; R. Fisher; Honeyford; Hymes; D. Schmidt; Sommers and Wolfe.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 4 members: Representatives L. Thomas, Vice Chairman; Hargrove; Mulliken and Van Luven.

Staff: Bonnie Austin (786-7135).

Background: A fire protection district may merge with an adjacent fire protection district. The district desiring to merge with another district is called the "merging district". The district into which the merger is to be made is called the "merger district". A petition to merge must be filed by the merging district with the merger district. If the merger district approves the petition, the merging district requests the county auditor to call a special election for the purpose of presenting the merger question to the voters of the merging district. If three-fifths of the votes cast at the election favor the merger, the respective district boards adopt concurrent resolutions that declare the districts merged under the name of the merger district.

Typically, local governments such as cities, towns, sewer districts, and water districts are allowed to merge if a majority of voters in the merging district approve the merger.

Summary of Bill: The requirement for a three-fifths vote to approve a merger of fire protection districts is repealed. Fire protection districts may merge upon a majority of the votes cast at the election.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: We need less government in this state. This bill makes it easier for fire districts to merge, which will result in fewer districts. We have too many fire districts in the state. This makes the law for fire district mergers consistent with the law for other taxing districts.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Senators Haugen and Winsley, prime sponsors; and Roger Ferris, Washington Fire Commissioners Association.