
Local Government Committee

BILL ANALYSIS SB 5760

TITLE OF THE BILL: Allowing unincorporated territory adjacent to a fire protection district to be annexed.

WHAT THIS BILL DOES: *Changes the description of property subject to annexation by a fire protection district under the election method from contiguous to adjacent property.*

SPONSORS: Senate State and Local Government Committee (originally sponsored by Senators Goings, Haugen, McCaslin and Patterson.)

HEARING DATE: Thursday, March 25, 1999

FISCAL NOTE: Not requested.

ANALYSIS PREPARED BY: Caroleen Dineen (786-7156)

BACKGROUND:

Fire protection districts are created to provide fire prevention, fire suppression and emergency medical services within the districts' boundaries. Fire protection districts are governed by a board of commissioners consisting of either three or five members.

Fire protection districts serve residents outside of cities or towns, except when cities and towns have been annexed into a fire protection district or when the district continues to provide service to a newly incorporated area. The districts finance their activities and facilities by imposing regular property taxes, excess voter-approved property tax levies, and benefit charges.

A fire protection district may annex territory under various methods:

- **Unincorporated Area/Election.** For property contiguous to the fire protection district and not

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within the boundaries of any city, town or other fire protection district, an annexation process begins with a petition signed by 15 percent of the qualified registered voters residing within the proposed annexation territory. If the fire protection district commissioners concur, the petition is submitted to the county legislative authority or boundary review board and, if approved, to the voters of the proposed annexation territory at a special election.

- **Unincorporated Area/Petition.** Alternatively, property contiguous to the fire protection district may be annexed upon petition signed by owners of at least 60 percent of the proposed annexation territory. The fire protection district commissioners may accept the petition and hold a public hearing on the petition. The district may adopt a resolution to annex all or a portion of the proposed annexation territory, and the district's action is subject to review by the county legislative authority or boundary review board.
- **Contiguous City or Town.** A city or town with population fewer than 100,000 and contiguous to a fire protection district may by ordinance seek annexation to the district. A special election on the annexation is held within the city or town and the district.

SUMMARY:

For unincorporated property annexed according to the election method, the description of property subject to fire protection district annexation is amended. A fire protection district may annex territory under this method if it is adjacent to the district and not within any city, town or other fire protection district. The description of property subject to annexation under other methods (i.e., contiguous unincorporated area or contiguous city or town) is not changed.