

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6717

As Passed Senate, February 15, 2008

Title: An act relating to public utility district commissioner salaries.

Brief Description: Increasing public utility district commissioner salaries.

Sponsors: Senators Hatfield, Pridemore, Sheldon, Hobbs, Berkey, Fairley, McDermott and Delvin.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Government Operations & Elections:1/24/08, 2/4/08 [DP-WM, DNP].
Passed Senate: 2/15/08, 39-9.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ELECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Fairley, Chair; Oemig, Vice Chair; Kline, McDermott and Pridemore.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senator Roach, Ranking Minority Member and Benton.

Staff: Khalia Gibson (786-7460)

Background: Commissioners of public utility districts (PUDs) currently receive a salary of 1 thousand dollars per month during a calendar year if the district received total gross revenue of over 15 million dollars during the fiscal year ending June 30. The board of commissioners of the district may pass a resolution increasing the salary rate up to 13 hundred dollars per month.

Commissioners of PUDs currently receive a salary of 7 hundred dollars per month during a calendar year if the district received total gross revenue of between 2 million dollars and 15 million dollars during the fiscal year ending June 30. The board of commissioners of the district may pass a resolution increasing the salary rate up to 9 hundred dollars per month.

Commissioners of other districts serve without salaries. However, the board of commissioners of the district may pass a resolution providing for salaries not exceeding 4 hundred dollars per month for each commissioner.

Summary of Bill: Commissioners of PUDs receive a salary of 14 hundred dollars per month during a calendar year if the district received total gross revenue of over 15 million dollars during the fiscal year ending June 30. The board of commissioners of the district may pass a resolution increasing the salary rate up to 18 hundred dollars per month.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Commissioners of PUDs receive a salary of 1 thousand dollars per month during a calendar year if the district received total gross revenue of between 2 million dollars and 15 million dollars during the fiscal year ending June 30. The board of commissioners of the district may pass a resolution increasing the salary rate up to 13 hundred dollars per month.

Commissioners of other districts must serve without salaries. However, the board of commissioners of the district may pass a resolution providing for salaries not exceeding 6 hundred dollars per month for each commissioner.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 18, 2008.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: There are 28 public utility districts (PUD) which provide one half of the state's power supply. PUD commissioners are elected officials, and their salaries have not been increased since 1996. This bill would avoid the possibility of future legislation on this issue because the Office of Financial Management would automatically perform salary adjustments every five years. This is a cost of living increase rather than a mere salary increase, and is a reasonable amount. Increasing the salary provides incentive for qualified candidates to run for open positions. Commissioners are accessible to customers at all hours for power outages and other utility emergencies.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Vicki Austin, Washington Public Utilities District Association; Bruce Jorgenson, Mason #3 Public Utility District; Ned Piper, Cowlitz Public Utility District.