
Finance Committee

HB 1960

Brief Description: Establishing benefit assessment charges for metropolitan park districts.

Sponsors: Representative Seaquist.

<p style="text-align: center;">Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Authorizes Metropolitan Park Districts to impose benefit charges for up to six years subject to voter approval.

Hearing Date: 2/26/13

Staff: Jeff Olsen (786-7175).

Background:

Metropolitan Park Districts.

A metropolitan park district (MPD) is a type of special purpose district that may be created for the management, control, improvement, maintenance, or acquisition of parks, parkways, boulevards, and recreational facilities. An MPD may levy up to 75 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value of property for park purposes.

Benefit Assessment Districts.

A benefit charge is a type of assessment used by districts and regional fire protection service authorities. A benefit charge is not based on the value of real property, but is instead linked to other factors such as insurance savings or the distance from fire service facilities. A district or authority may use this funding approach as a means for apportioning the costs of service to an individual property in a manner that reflects the actual benefits provided to that property.

Summary of Bill:

An MPD may, by resolution, impose benefit charges on real property located within the district to support park purposes. The benefit charges may not exceed an amount equal to 60 percent of

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the operating budget for the year in which the benefit charge will be collected. The benefit charge must be reasonably proportioned to the measurable benefits to property resulting from proximity to the park facilities maintained by the MPD.

A benefit charge is not effective until approved by a majority of voters at a general or special election. The election must be held not more than 12 months prior to the first charge being assessed, and the benefit charge expires in six or fewer years as authorized by voters. A public hearing must be held not fewer than ten days nor more than six months before the election to impose benefit charges.

Prior to November 15th each year, the governing board of the MPD must hold a public hearing to review and establish benefit charges. After notice has been given to property owners of the amount of a benefit charge, the MPD must form a review board to hear complaints from aggrieved parties, and adjust charges as they believe to be true and fair.

All property not assessed and subjected to ad valorem taxation property taxes is exempt from the benefit charge.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 25, 2013.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.