

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2922

As Reported By House Committee On:

Finance

Title: An act relating to archives and records management.

Brief Description: Funding local government archives and records management.

Sponsors: Representatives B. Thomas, Brown and Romero; by request of Secretary of State.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Finance: 2/5/96 [DPS].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives B. Thomas, Chairman; Boldt, Vice Chairman; Morris, Ranking Minority Member; Dickerson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Mason; Pennington and Schoesler.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 5 members: Representatives Carrell, Vice Chairman; Hymes; Mulliken; Sheldon and Van Luven.

Staff: Cheri Keller (786-7093).

Background: Among other duties, county auditors are responsible for recording deeds and other instruments in writing which by law are to be filed and recorded in counties.

In 1989, the Legislature authorized county auditors to implement a surcharge of \$2 per document for each document recorded. The revenue generated through this surcharge is for the ongoing preservation of historical documents of all county offices and departments.

The division of archives and records management was created in the Office of the Secretary of State in 1981 to ensure the proper management and safeguarding of public records. The state archivist administers the division. A schedule of fees and charges governing the service provided by the division to other state agencies, offices,

departments, and other entities is established by the Secretary of State and the Director of the Office of Financial Management. All such fees and charges collected are deposited in the archives and records management account in the state treasury, and are appropriated exclusively for use by the Secretary of State for the payment of costs and expenses incurred in the operation of the division of archives and records management.

In 1994, state agencies were authorized to collect a surcharge of \$20 from the judgement debtor upon satisfaction of a warrant filed in superior court for unpaid taxes or liabilities. The surcharge revenue is deposited in the archives and records management account. Revenue from this surcharge is to be expended exclusively for the payment and costs of expenses related to public archives and records management services to local government agencies by the division of archives and records management.

Summary of Substitute Bill: In addition to the surcharges mentioned above, and other charges authorized by law, county auditors must charge a surcharge of \$1 per instrument for each document recorded. Revenue generated through this surcharge is deposited in the archives and records management account. These funds are to be used for providing records scheduling, security microfilm inspection and storage, archival preservation, cataloging, and indexing for local government records through the regional branch archives of the division of archives and records management.

The \$20 surcharge implemented in 1994 is to be used exclusively for disaster recovery, essential records protection services, and records management training for local government agencies by the division of archives and records management.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The substitute bill removes the provision which contained an automatic increase in the surcharge tied to the Initiative 601 fiscal growth factor.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 30, 1996.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect on July 1, 1996.

Testimony For: The archives program in this state is egregiously underfunded. There has been a 200-900 percent growth in services provided by this division in the past 10 years, using the same number of employees. Keeping historic and valuable documents is a very important task. Without further funding we're in jeopardy of losing these important documents.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative Brian Thomas, prime sponsor; Sam Reed, Washington State Association of County Auditors; Ralph Munro, Secretary of State; and George Scott, State Archivist.