

6519-S

Sponsor(s): Senate Committee on Financial Services, Insurance & Housing (originally sponsored by Senators Benton, Prentice, Winsley and Kline)

Brief Description: Regulating third party utility billings.

SB 6519-S - DIGEST

(DIGEST OF PROPOSED 1ST SUBSTITUTE)

Declares that the purpose of this act is to prevent landlords, either themselves or through a third party billing agent, from billing tenants for master metered or other unmetered utility services without proper notice and disclosure of billing practices to tenants, and to protect tenants from deceptive or fraudulent billing practices, and to establish uniform statewide standards for third party utility billing.

Does not prevent a landlord from including a tenant's cost of master metered or unmetered utility services within the rent set forth in a rental agreement, and the practice of including that cost within a tenant's rent is not a billing practice or methodology affected by this chapter.

Does not affect the practices used by public utilities to bill and collect residential multiunit building owners or landlords for master metered or unmetered utility services.

Declares that a landlord shall not bill tenants separately for utility services except as permitted in this act.

Provides that a landlord shall not engage, retain, or authorize, and a landlord is liable for the actions of, a third party billing agent that does not comply with the requirements of this act.

Declares that the state of Washington fully occupies and preempts the entire field of residential third party utility billings. Cities, towns, and counties or other municipalities may enact only those laws and ordinances relating to third party utility billings that are consistent with this chapter. Local laws and ordinances that are inconsistent with, more restrictive than, or exceed the requirements of state law may not be enacted and are preempted and repealed, regardless of the nature of the code, charter, or home rule status of the city, town, county, or municipality.