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**Technology, Energy &  
Communications Committee**

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**HB 1952**

**Brief Description:** Establishing a local government interoperability pilot program.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Morris, O'Brien, Lovick, Ericks, Anderson and Kilmer.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Creates a local government interoperability communications system pilot program that is intended to demonstrate to local governments the value of implementing the pending interoperability standards.

**Hearing Date:** 2/24/05

**Staff:** Kara Durbin (786-7133).

**Background:**

In 2003, the Washington State Information Services Board established the State Interoperability Executive Committee (Committee) to take inventory of and evaluate all state and local government-owned public safety communications systems, and prepare a statewide public safety communications plan. The plan was to set forth recommendations for executive and legislative action to insure that public safety communications systems can communicate with one another and conform to federal law and regulations governing emergency communication systems and spectrum allocation. The plan was to include specific goals for improving interoperability of public safety communications systems and identifiable benchmarks for achieving those goals.

In December of 2004, the Committee submitted its final report to the Legislature. In its report, the Committee found that the majority of public safety responders are not able to communicate effectively or directly with their federal, state, regional, local, or tribal counterparts. The Committee also found there is a lack of financial resources to support the vision of interoperability within the state.

**Summary of Bill:**

A local government interoperability communication system pilot program is established. The legislature intends to limit the pilot program to a county public safety agency that develops a funding partnership among federal, state, and local government.

On or before July 1, 2006, the state interoperability executive committee shall award a \$5 million grant to a single public safety agency. The grant is designed to assist a county public safety agency in developing a communications system that is capable of interoperating with state agencies, as well as other local governments.

In order to be eligible for the grant, a county public safety agency must do all of the following:

- (1) Secure \$5 million from the federal government for the purpose of partnering with the State of Washington to implement an interoperable communication system;
- (2) Enact a countywide measure to fund public safety communication equipment and to raise a minimum of \$5 million;
- (3) Agree that all communication equipment purchased by the public agency shall be digital equipment that complies with P25 standards established by the Association of Public Safety Communications Officials, National Association of State Telecommunication Directors, and federal government agencies;
- (4) Comply with all current and future interoperability communication standards adopted by the state interoperability executive committee.

This pilot program is null and void if specified funding or grants are not secured by July 1, 2006.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on February 21, 2005.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed. However, the bill is null and void unless funded in the budget.