

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SHB 1960

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As of April 1, 2013

**Title:** An act relating to establishing benefit assessment charges for metropolitan park districts.

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

**Sponsors:** House Committee on Finance (originally sponsored by Representative Seaquist).

**Brief History:** Passed House: 3/13/13, 65-33.

**Committee Activity:** Governmental Operations: 3/26/13.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS

**Staff:** Sam Thompson (786-7413)

**Background:** A metropolitan park district (MPD) is a special purpose district formed to acquire and maintain parks, parkways, boulevards, and recreational facilities. To finance operations, an MPD may levy up to \$0.75 per \$1,000 of assessed value of property in the MPD.

Some special purpose districts, including fire protection districts, may impose benefit charges upon property served. Benefit charges may be based on several factors, such as insurance savings accountable to proximity to a district's fire service facilities, and may vary among particular parcels in a district. Voters must approve a proposition to impose benefit charges.

**Summary of Bill:** An MPD may, by resolution, impose benefit charges on real property in the MPD. Benefit charges may not exceed the amount that could be collected under the MPD property tax levy. A benefit charge must be reasonably proportioned to measurable benefits to property resulting from proximity to park facilities maintained by the MPD.

A benefit charge is not effective until approved by a majority of MPD voters. A public hearing must be held on a proposed benefit charge. A benefit charge expires in six or fewer years, as authorized by voters.

If a benefit charge is approved, the MPD governing board must annually hold a public hearing to review and establish benefit charges. A review board must hear complaints and may adjust benefit charges. Property not subject to property tax is exempt from the benefit charge.

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*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.*

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**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: Property tax levies of certain MPDs were reduced under a prorationing process that applies when property tax levies total more than \$5.90 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation of property subject to taxation. This legislation, an alternative to proposals in order to exempt certain MPD levies from the \$5.90 limit, appropriately allows MPDs to impose benefit charges, if approved by voters, to continue to fund the facilities and services they provide.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Representative Seaquist, prime sponsor; Bill Trandum, Key Peninsula Metro Park District; Terry Lee, Peninsula Metropolitan Park District.