

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5443

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Governmental Operations, February 21, 2013

Title: An act relating to creating greater efficiency in the offices of county assessors by allowing notification via electronic means.

Brief Description: Creating greater efficiency in the offices of county assessors by allowing notification via electronic means.

Sponsors: Senators Roach, Hasegawa, Keiser, Chase and Mullet.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Governmental Operations: 2/12/13, 2/21/13 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Roach, Chair; Benton, Vice Chair; Hasegawa, Ranking Member; Braun, Conway, Fraser and Rivers.

Staff: Sam Thompson (786-7413)

Background: County assessors must mail taxpayers notices regarding tax assessments and other tax administrative information.

Summary of Bill: When an assessor is required to send any assessment, notice, or other information to persons by regular mail, the assessor may instead provide the information electronically, if the person entitled to receive the information authorizes the assessor to do so. If the information is subject to confidentiality restrictions, the assessor must use methods to protect it from unauthorized disclosure, unless the taxpayer has provided a waiver, which will continue until revoked by the taxpayer.

Electronic notice continues until revoked by the taxpayer. Electronic transmittal may be by electronic mail or other means reasonably calculated to apprise the person of the information provided. Information is deemed to have been mailed and received on the date the assessor electronically sends it or electronically notifies the person that it is available for access.

Information compiled or possessed by the assessor to provide tax notices, including but not

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limited to taxpayer email addresses and passwords, is not subject to disclosure under the state Public Records Act.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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: This legislation could enable counties to save considerable postal costs. Concerns regarding changes in taxpayer email addresses could be addressed in authorizing agreements, which could require taxpayers to keep email addresses up to date and provide that postal addresses become default addresses if email is undeliverable.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Monty Cobb, WA Assn. of County Officials.