

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2010

As Reported by House Committee On:
Community Development, Housing & Tribal Affairs

Title: An act relating to the prevention of homelessness in wildfire areas.

Brief Description: Addressing homelessness in wildfire areas.

Sponsors: Representatives Maycumber, Dent, Blake, Kretz, Dye and Manweller.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Community Development, Housing & Tribal Affairs: 2/14/17, 2/16/17 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Expands the authorized uses of the \$40 local homeless housing and assistance surcharge in certain counties to include educating homeowners about wildfire risk and prevention measures and wildfire prevention and response activities.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, HOUSING & TRIBAL AFFAIRS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 5 members: Representatives Ryu, Chair; McCabe, Ranking Minority Member; Barkis, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Jenkin and Sawyer.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 1 member: Representative Reeves.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative Macri, Vice Chair.

Staff: Kirsten Lee (786-7133).

Background:

The Local Homeless Housing and Assistance Surcharge.

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.

Both the state and local homeless housing programs receive funding from the homeless housing and assistance surcharge collected by each county auditor when most documents are recorded. The surcharge is \$40 per recorded document, but is scheduled to change back to \$10 in 2019. The surcharge is applied in addition to any other authorized surcharges, as well as any administrative fees collected by the county auditor. An additional homeless housing and assistance surcharge of \$8 is also collected by each county auditor.

Both the state and the county receive a percentage of the money collected from each surcharge. Approximately 60 percent is distributed to the county, and approximately 40 percent to the state. The funds collected for the local homeless housing and assistance surcharge are distributed as follows:

- 2 percent to the county for collection of the fee;
- 60 percent of the remainder to the county for its homeless housing program, up to 6 percent of which may be used for administering its homeless housing plan;
- 40 percent of the remainder to be deposited in the Home Security Fund (Fund), up to 12.5 percent of which may be used by the Department of Commerce (Department) for managing the state Homeless Housing Program, including the costs of creating the statewide homeless housing strategic plan, measuring performance, providing technical assistance to local governments, and managing the homeless housing grant program;
- of the remaining 87.5 percent of the 40 percent, at least 45 percent must be set aside for private rental housing payments; and
- the remainder of all funds go to the Department to be used to provide housing and shelter for homeless people and fund the homeless housing grant program.

Home Security Fund.

The state's share of the \$40 homeless housing and assistance surcharge is deposited into the Fund, along with funds from the additional \$8 homeless housing and assistance surcharge. The Fund is an appropriated account and may be used only for homeless housing programs. The Office of Financial Management oversees certain compliance regulations for the Fund. The Department uses these funds for multiple homeless housing programs.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Until June 30, 2019, funds collected for the \$40 local homeless housing and assistance surcharge may be used to educate homeowner's about wildfire risk and prevention measures and wildfire prevention and response activities in counties that are:

- located east of the crest of the Cascade Mountains;
- share a common border with Canada; and
- have a population of 100,000 or less.

Any eligible county electing to use Local Homeless and Housing Assistance surcharge funds for the authorized purposes, must hold a public hearing before using funding.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill: (1) limits eligibility to use funds for wildfire prevention to counties that border Canada; (2) requires eligible counties to hold a public hearing before using funds for wildfire prevention; and (3) expires the authority for counties to use funds to educate homeowner's about wildfire risk and prevention measures and for wildfire prevention and response activities on June 30, 2019.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) In some areas of the state, where there is a need to fund wildfire efforts, there are excess local homeless housing and assistance surcharge funds that could be used for this purpose. There is a need for counties to be able to access these existing funds for this added purpose.

(Opposed) There is a concern that expanding the use of local homeless housing and assistance surcharge funds will divert funding from current homeless programs. In the past, these funds have been used to provide aid to persons displaced from their homes because of wildfires, providing both temporary and long-term housing solutions. There is concern that this legislation will expand the use of these funds beyond homeless prevention and funds will be diverted to more fire specific activities, including fighting fires and clearing brush.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Maycumber, prime sponsor; and Wes McCart, Stevens County Commissioner.

(Opposed) Nick Federici, Washington Low-Income Housing Alliance.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.