

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6582

As Passed Senate, February 19, 2020

Title: An act relating to the number of fire protection district commissioners.

Brief Description: Concerning the number of fire protection district commissioners.

Sponsors: Senators Hobbs, Stanford, Muzzall, Salomon, McCoy, Wagoner and Lias.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Local Government: 1/28/20 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed Senate: 2/19/20, 48-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Allows a fire protection district board of five commissioners to increase to seven commissioners if approved by a majority of voters.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Takko, Chair; Salomon, Vice Chair; Short, Ranking Member; Honeyford and Lovelett.

Staff: Bonnie Kim (786-7316)

Background: Fire Protection Districts. Fire protection districts (fire districts) are created to provide fire and emergency services to protect life and property in locations outside of cities and towns. A fire district may be established through a process involving a petition by the residents of a proposed district, a public hearing, and three-fifths voter approval.

Fire districts are governed by a board of three, five, or seven elected fire commissioners. A fire district may, by resolution or by petition signed by 10 percent of voters, increase the number of commissioners of the district. The board must submit a resolution to the county legislative authority which then calls a special election proposing an increase from three board members to five or seven members. A majority of voters must approve the increase.

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.

Summary of Bill: A fire protection district board of commissioners with five members may increase to seven members if approved by a majority of voters.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Our fire districts have merged for efficiency reasons and would like to have good representation, but the statute does not allow a five member commissioner board to go to seven. When we merged, we found the statute did not allow us to go from five to seven members. It looks like this was a mistake. This problem was an oversight, and the amendment in this bill corrects the issue.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Ryan Spiller, Washington Fire Commissioners Association; Jeff Schaub, Fire Commissioner, Snohomish County Fire District 7; Kevin O'Brien, Fire Chief, Snohomish County Fire District 7.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.