

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1050

*As Reported By House Committee on:
Local Government*

Title: An act relating to emergency medical services districts excess levies.

Brief Description: Modifying the type of emergency medical service districts that may impose excess levies.

Sponsor(s): Representatives Morris, Cooper, Wynne, Peery, Ogden, Wang, Nealey and H. Myers.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Local Government, February 26, 1991, DPS.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

Majority Report: *That Substitute House Bill No. 1050 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.*
Signed by 14 members: Representatives Haugen, Chair; Cooper, Vice Chair; Ferguson, Ranking Minority Member; Mitchell, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bray; Edmondson; Franklin; Horn; Nelson; Rayburn; Roland; Wood; Wynne; and Zellinsky.

Staff: Steve Lundin (786-7127).

Background: Five separate units of local government have been authorized to submit requests to their voters to authorize regular property tax levies, of up to 25 cents per \$1,000 of assessed valuation for six years, to finance emergency medical services within the local government. These local governments are counties, cities and towns, fire protection districts, public hospital districts, and emergency medical service districts.

An emergency medical service district is created by action of the county legislative authority and may include all or part of the unincorporated territory in the county. The only powers of an emergency medical service district are to impose these voter approved property taxes, if authorized by the voters, and provide emergency medical services within its boundaries.

These emergency medical service property tax levies are regular property tax levies, and not excess property tax levies beyond the constitutional 1 percent limitation on the cumulative amount of regular property taxes that can be imposed on any property. However, the vote that is required to authorize these regular property tax levies is the same vote that is required to authorize excess property tax levies, i.e., the ballot proposition must be approved by at least 60 percent of the votes cast on the issue, with a 40 percent validation requirement.

Every local government that has been authorized to impose regular property taxes also has been authorized to impose excess property tax levies, except for emergency medical service districts. The statute that authorizes these taxing districts to impose excess property tax levies lists each of these taxing districts three times. One sentence lists each of these taxing districts as the compound subject of the sentence, and then lists each of these taxing districts again in a separate parenthetical clause in the same sentence.

Records from the Department of Revenue indicate that for collections in 1990, 142 different taxing districts were imposing these regular property tax levies to finance emergency medical services, including 79 fire protection districts, 38 cities or towns, 18 emergency medical service districts, four public hospital districts, and three counties. In addition, Thurston County imposes an excess property tax levy to finance emergency medical services in the county.

Summary of Substitute Bill: Any emergency medical service district, with a population density of less than 1,000 persons per square mile, is authorized to impose excess property tax levies.

A drafting error from several years ago is corrected to reflect that transportation benefit districts have been authorized to impose excess property tax levies.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: This is merely a technical rewrite. The term "taxing district" is defined to include each of those taxing districts and the substantive parts of the section use the term "taxing district" instead of the long list of taxing districts each time.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: This clears up a technical mistake with emergency medical services (EMS) districts not being included. This keeps larger EMS districts from using excess levies. We support the bill, even though we want an amendment to delete the size restriction.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: (Testified in favor): Tom McDowell, North Country EMS; Otto Jensen, Washington State Association of Fire Chiefs; Susie Tracy, Washington Ambulance Association; and Pete Spiller, Washington Fire Districts (in favor with amendment).