

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1716

AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS,  
MARCH 25, 1991

**Brief Description:** Standardizing terminology relating to county auditors and recording officers.

**SPONSORS:** Representatives Wood, Haugen, Ferguson, Cooper, Zellinsky, Miller, Franklin, Beck, Bray, Edmondson, Horn, Wynne, Rayburn, Nealey, Roland, Mitchell, Winsley and Paris.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators McCaslin, Chairman; Roach, Vice Chairman; Madsen, Matson, and Sutherland.

**Staff:** Barbara Howard (786-7410)

**Hearing Dates:** March 25, 1991

**BACKGROUND:**

A recording committee of county auditors has conducted a study of obsolete statutes relating to public records and made several recommendations for change, all of which are intended to modernize the public recording process.

There is no standard definition of "recording officer." In all but home rule counties, the auditor is the official records officer. A charter may designate some other official to perform the recording function.

Among the recorder's duties is entering official documents into the public record upon payment of appropriate fees. Typical recorded documents include deeds, mortgages, and powers of attorney to convey real estate.

Technology has rendered several recording processes obsolete, including the media upon which records can be stored, the form of the general index and the costs of some transactions.

**SUMMARY:**

A "recording officer" is the county auditor or, in charter counties, the official responsible for public records. The terms "file," "record" and "record location number" are also clarified. The recording processes may include electronic, mechanical, optical, magnetic or microfilm storage.

The fee for recording multiple transactions in a single instrument is calculated individually when the document must be indexed separately. The direct and indirect indexes may be combined into the general index. The requirement for a bound plat book is deleted.

**Appropriation:** none

**Revenue:** none

**Fiscal Note:** none requested

**TESTIMONY FOR:**

The bill specifically modifies recording laws to take advantage of modern electronic techniques, and clarifies definitions of terms. It allows better service to customers.

**TESTIMONY AGAINST:** None

**TESTIFIED:** PRO: Zona Lenhart, Franklin County Auditor; Sue Burkley, Thurston County Records Manager; Bev Allenbaugh, Kittitas County Auditor