

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESHB 2338

AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS,
FEBRUARY 20, 1992

Brief Description: Authorizing a county research service.

SPONSORS: House Committee on Local Government (originally sponsored by Representatives Haugen, Wood, Hine, Chandler, Cantwell, Brough, Rayburn, Horn, Rasmussen, Ferguson, Dorn, Riley, Forner, Mitchell, Spanel, Basich, Fuhrman, Jacobsen and Bray)

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON REVENUE

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators McCaslin, Chairman; Madsen, and Sutherland.

Staff: Barbara Howard (786-7410)

Hearing Dates: February 20, 1992

BACKGROUND:

The Municipal Research Council is a state agency established to contract for the provision of municipal research and services to cities and towns. The council is composed of 18 members who are appointed as follows: (1) four members are appointed by the Speaker of the House with equal representation from each of the two major political parties; (2) four members are appointed by the President of the Senate with equal representation from each of the two major political parties; (3) one member is appointed by the Governor; and (4) nine members are appointed by the board of directors of the Association of Washington Cities.

Counties do not have a similar research council.

For years the Municipal Research Council has contracted with the Municipal Research and Services Center of Washington, a private nonprofit corporation, for the provision of these services.

Money appropriated to the Municipal Research Council is diverted from state motor vehicle excise tax receipts that otherwise would be distributed to cities on a per capita basis.

One and six-tenths percent of the state motor vehicle excise tax receipts are placed into the county sales and use tax equalization account and are distributed to various counties under a distribution formula. Unused moneys are returned to the state general fund.

In fiscal year 1991, \$6.023 million was distributed to counties under the sales and use tax equalization program and \$538,000 was returned to the state general fund.

SUMMARY:

The responsibilities of the Municipal Research Council are expanded to include contracting for county research and services, in addition to city and town research and services. The services provided to cities, towns and counties shall be in proportion to the moneys appropriated for city and town research and services and county research and services.

The county research and services account is created in the state treasury. Each year, moneys remaining after distribution of state motor vehicle excise tax receipts to counties under the sales and use tax equalization program are placed into this account. The annual amount shall not exceed the lesser of one half of the biennial appropriation for county research or 15 cents for each person residing in the unincorporated areas of the state.

If the moneys are not sufficient to fully fund both the distribution for county research and the distribution under SHB 2520, then both will be reduced proportionately. (SHB 2520 expands distribution of the motor vehicle excise tax to cover acquisition of wildlife lands, which had been funded through in-lieu tax payments from the Department of Wildlife.) Unused moneys are transferred to the state general fund. Moneys in the county research and services account may be spent only after appropriation and only to finance the costs of county research.

The number of members on the Municipal Research Council is increased from 18 to 19. Four of the legislative members are eliminated and replaced with five county-elected officials. The governor appoints the county, city, and town officials to the Municipal Research Council. Council members who are appointed as legislators or local officials lose their council positions, if they no longer are legislators or local officials. A council member remains on the council after his or her term expires until a successor is appointed.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: requested February 15, 1992

TESTIMONY FOR:

The Municipal Research and Services Center provides extensive legal, fiscal and policy research to local governments. It has already provided services to counties on a contract from the Department of Community Development for the Growth Management Act. It is a natural facility to serve the counties, since many of the problems are similar. No new entity is needed.

TESTIMONY AGAINST: None

TESTIFIED: PRO: Gary Lowe, Washington State Association of Counties; Stan Finkelstein, Association of Washington Cities; Rich Yukubousky, Municipal Research and Services Center