

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5098

As of February 25, 2003

Title: An act relating to department of fish and wildlife law enforcement officers' membership in the law enforcement officers' and fire fighters' retirement system plan 2 for periods of future service.

Brief Description: Addressing the department of fish and wildlife law enforcement officers' membership in the law enforcement officers' and fire fighters' retirement system plan 2 for periods of future service.

Sponsors: Senators Jacobsen, Winsley, Fraser, Carlson, Rasmussen and Esser; by request of Joint Committee on Pension Policy.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Ways & Means: 2/26/03.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Staff: Erik Sund (786-7454)

Background: Law enforcement officers in the Department of Fish and Wildlife are members of the Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS). Under PERS Plans 2 and 3, employees may retire with full benefits beginning at age 65 or with reduced benefits beginning at age 55. In 2002, the Legislature passed ESB 6076, which redefined the Department of Fish and Wildlife as a general authority law enforcement agency. This could have qualified Fish and Wildlife enforcement officers for enrollment in the Law Enforcement Officers' and Fire Fighters' Retirement System (LEOFF) if the bill had not also specified that they remain in PERS.

Summary of Bill: New law enforcement officers of the Department of Fish and Wildlife are enrolled in LEOFF Plan 2. Officers may retire with full benefits at age 53. They may also choose to retire with reduced benefits as early as age 50, provided that they have accumulated 20 years' service credit.

Department of Fish and Wildlife officers already enrolled in PERS Plans 2 or 3 retain their service credit in that system but are enrolled in LEOFF Plan 2 for the purposes of all future service. They are eligible for retirement under LEOFF Plan 2 at age 53; however, if they elect to receive PERS benefits at that age, those benefits will be reduced according to the rules for early retirement in PERS. They may also choose to delay receipt of PERS benefits until age 65 in order to avoid the penalty for early retirement.

Officers enrolled in PERS Plan 1 remain in that plan.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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