

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5337

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Government Operations & Elections, February 3, 2005

Title: An act relating to metropolitan park districts.

Brief Description: Concerning metropolitan park districts.

Sponsors: Senators Rockefeller, Kastama and Roach.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Government Operations & Elections: 1/24/05, 2/3/05 [DP]

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ELECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Kastama, Chair; Berkey, Vice Chair; Haugen, Kline, McCaslin, Mulliken and Pridemore.

Staff: Diane Smith (786-7410)

Background: Park and recreation districts are special purpose districts that provide leisure time activities, facilities and recreational facilities as a public service to the residents of the area within their boundaries. Their area may include incorporated and unincorporated property. They are formed by petition of 15 percent of the registered voters within the area proposed to become the park and recreation district. The board of county commissioners fixes the boundaries and together with any funding obligations, presents the proposition to the voters.

The park and recreation district is governed by a board of five elected commissioners with four-year staggered terms. The district may fund its operations by means of excess levies and regular property tax levies. Disposal of property must be by unanimous vote of the district commissioners.

A metropolitan park district (MPD) is a special purpose district created by a vote of the people in the proposed district. The ballot proposition can be proposed either by citizen-petition (15 percent) or by resolution of the governing bodies of the cities and counties in which the district would be created. The only MPD currently in the state is governed by an elected board of five commissioners who hold six-year staggered terms.

Summary of Bill: A MPD may accept at any time after July 1, 2004, by gift or purchase a park and recreation district that is wholly within the MPD and that has outstanding voter-approved indebtedness that the the MPD intends to discharge. A majority vote of the MPD commissioners may issue refunding bonds in order to retire the voter-approved indebtedness of the park and recreation district if certain conditions are met.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Testimony For: The City of Bainbridge was having trouble making ends meet so they sought to create a metropolitan park district to continue providing parks and recreation. There are two other cities where this transfer from a park district to a newly formed metropolitan park district is occurring. The transfers all began a short time after July 1, 2004. The dates the transfers will be complete is unknown at this time. Therefore, the emergency clause depends upon the date the bill becomes law.

Testimony Against: None.

Who Testified: PRO: Mike Ryherd, Bainbridge Island Park District.