

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5182

As Passed Senate, March 2, 2015

Title: An act relating to granting fire protection districts and regional fire protection service authorities biennial budget authority.

Brief Description: Granting fire protection districts and regional fire protection service authorities biennial budget authority.

Sponsors: Senators Dammeier and Liias.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Government Operations & Security (Note: Senate Resolution 8609 adopted January 27, 2015, renamed the Committee on Government Operations & State Security to Committee on Government Operations & Security): 1/27/15, 2/03/15 [DP].
Passed Senate: 3/02/15, 46-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & SECURITY

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Roach, Chair; Benton, Vice Chair; Pearson, Vice Chair; Liias, Ranking Minority Member; Habib and McCoy.

Staff: Samuel Brown (786-7470)

Background: Fire Protection Districts. Fire protection districts (districts) are created to provide fire prevention, fire suppression, and emergency services within a district's boundaries. A district may be established through voter approval. A district is governed by a board of commissioners (board) composed of three, five, or seven members who are registered voters residing in the district. The board must hold regular monthly meetings and may call special meetings at any time under the Open Public Meetings Act. A district may be financed by imposing regular property taxes, excess voter-approved property tax levies, and benefit charges. A district has the powers and authorities of a municipal corporation, including taxation, eminent domain, and the authority to enter into contracts. The secretary of the district must prepare and deliver an annual budget to the legislative authority in the county or counties in which the district is located so that tax levies can be made for district purposes.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Regional Fire Protection Service Authority. A Regional Fire Protection Service Authority (Authority) may be created for the purpose of conducting specified fire protection functions at a regional level. An Authority may be created by the merger of two or more adjacent fire protection jurisdictions including fire protection districts, cities, port districts, and Indian tribes. An Authority may also be created by a vote of the people that approves an Authority plan (plan), and the creation of the Authority, as a single ballot measure. An Authority may impose property taxes, benefit charges, or both. An Authority is governed by a board charged with executing the plan. Board membership is determined by the plan and is limited to elected officials. The board is empowered to levy and impose taxes as authorized; enter into intergovernmental agreements; acquire, hold, or dispose of real property; exercise the powers of eminent domain; and exercise other powers and duties as are reasonably necessary to carry out its purposes.

Summary of Bill: Districts may adopt a biennial budget in lieu of an annual budget with a mid-biennium review and modification for the second year of the biennial budget.

An Authority may adopt a biennial budget with a mid-biennium review and modification for the second year of the biennial budget.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This is a good government bill that is permissive in nature. Managing finances over a longer time period will allow for prudent management of our resources. Allowing citizens to look at the agencies budgets is a good thing and provides transparency. The biennial budget cycle is allowed in towns, cities, and counties; this will save us time. Biennial budgeting provides a better planning tool, giving us the ability to identify structural changes that are needed. Allowing citizens to have annual input would allow them to weigh in if they so choose.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Dammeier, prime sponsor; Tanya Robacker, Central Pierce Fire & Rescue.