

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1863

As of March 31, 2017

Title: An act relating to the national fire incident reporting system.

Brief Description: Concerning the national fire incident reporting system.

Sponsors: House Committee on Appropriations (originally sponsored by Representatives Gregerson, Stokesbary, Appleton and Stambaugh).

Brief History: Passed House: 3/06/17, 98-0.

Committee Activity: Local Government: 3/21/17, 3/21/17 [DP-WM].

Ways & Means: 3/30/17.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Chief of the Washington State Patrol, through the Director of Fire Protection, to administer the National Fire Incident Reporting System subject to available appropriations.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

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

Signed by Senators Short, Chair; Angel, Vice Chair; Takko, Ranking Minority Member; Palumbo and Sheldon.

Staff: Alex Fairfortune (786-7416)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Staff: Travis Sugarman (786-7446)

Background: National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS). The NFIRS is a standard reporting system developed by the United State Fire Administration (USFA) to collect uniform fire incident information. After responding to an incident, a participating fire department completes a series of NFIRS modules that collect a common set of information. This information describes the nature of the call, the actions firefighters took in response, and the end results, such as casualties and a property loss estimate. The fire department then

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forwards this information to the state agency responsible for collecting the NFIRS data. The state agency gathers data from all participating departments in the state and reports the compiled data to the USFA.

Fire Reporting. The chief of each fire department, or the sheriff or designated county official in jurisdictions without a fire department, must report statistical information and data on each fire that occurs within their jurisdiction to the Chief of the Washington State Patrol (WSP Chief), through the Director of Fire Protection (Director). Fire departments must report any deaths resulting from a fire within two business days. These reports must be consistent with the NFIRS and rules established by the WSP Chief.

The WSP Chief, through the Director, must analyze the information and data reported, compile a report, and distribute a copy annually to each chief fire official by July 1st.

Summary of Bill: Subject to the availability of appropriated funds, the WSP Chief, through the Director, must administer the NFIRS or the state equivalent, including the following:

- purchasing equipment to operate the NFIRS;
- establishing procedures, standards, and guidelines pertaining to the statistical information and data reported by fire departments through the NFIRS;
- providing training and education to fire departments pertaining to the NFIRS; and
- employing staff, as needed, to administer the NFIRS.

A null and void clause is included in the event specific funding is not provided in the budget.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Local Government): PRO: When the Governor asked state agencies to make budget cuts in 2010, this program was cut. If funds become available, the program should be brought back. Without a statewide reporting system, the state has no data on the types of fire incidents that are occurring or their causes. It is important to have this information to determine how fire services are currently doing and how they can be improved. The lack of reporting also limits access to federal grants. If possible, the age of structures should be added to the data collected.

Persons Testifying (Local Government): PRO: Representative Mia Gregerson, Prime Sponsor; Dylan Doty, Washington Fire Chiefs; Jan Himebaugh, Building Industry Association of Washington.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Local Government): No one.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony (Ways & Means): PRO: While, this information is currently required, in 2010 there were cuts made that removed the FTE which oversaw the

data collection, since then participation has gone from over 90 percent to somewhere in the 40th percentile. This would restore the program. Washington Fire Chiefs offered to take on the task in 2010 but were unable to maintain without additional funding. This information is important. I would like to ask for an amendment to add the requirement for age of building information.

Persons Testifying (Ways & Means): PRO: Dylan Doty, WA Fire Chiefs Association; Geoff Simpson, Washington State Council Of Fire Fighters; Jan Himebaugh, Building Industry Association of Washington.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Ways & Means): No one.