

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6414

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As Reported by Senate Committee On:  
Local Government, February 4, 2020

**Title:** An act relating to waiving utility connection charges for certain properties.

**Brief Description:** Waiving utility connection charges for certain properties.

**Sponsors:** Senators Stanford and Dhingra.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Local Government: 1/21/20, 2/04/20 [DPS, DNP, w/oRec].

**Brief Summary of First Substitute Bill**

- Requires certain local utility providers in jurisdictions that have declared a homelessness emergency to waive connection charges for properties used as emergency shelters for homeless persons or victims of domestic violence who are homeless for personal safety reasons.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6414 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Takko, Chair; Salomon, Vice Chair; Lovelett.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass.

Signed by Senator Honeyford.

**Minority Report:** That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senator Short, Ranking Member.

**Staff:** Bonnie Kim (786-7316)

**Background:** Cooperative Associations. Any number of persons may associate themselves together as a cooperative association, society, company, or exchange, with or without capital stock, for the transaction of any lawful business on the cooperative plan. A "locally regulated utility" is an electric service cooperative not subject to rate or service regulation by the

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*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.*

Utilities and Transportation Commission. All rates, terms, and conditions made, demanded or received by a locally regulated utility for attachments to its poles must be just, reasonable, nondiscriminatory, and sufficient.

A locally regulated utility must levy attachment space rental rates that are uniform for the same class of service within the locally regulated utility service area. "Attachment" means the affixation or installation of any wire, cable or other physical material capable of carrying electronic impulses or light waves for the carrying of intelligence for telecommunications or television, including, but not limited to cable, and any related device, apparatus, or auxiliary equipment upon any pole owned or controlled in whole or in part by one or more locally regulated utilities where the installation has been made with the necessary consent.

Nonprofit and Mutual Corporations. A mutual corporation is any corporation organized for a purpose or in a manner not provided for by the Washington Business Corporation Act or by the Washington Nonprofit Corporation Act, and which is not required to be organized under other laws of the state.

Municipal Utilities. Any city or town may offer a variety of utility services to its residents, including waterworks, sewerage and solid waste handling systems. Counties may also provide certain utility services, including a system of sewerage and/or water.

Public Utility Districts. Public utility districts (PUDs) are a type of special purpose district authorized for the purpose of generating and distributing electricity, providing water and sewer services, and providing telecommunications services.

**Summary of Bill (First Substitute):** In counties and cities that have declared a homelessness emergency, cooperative associations, nonprofit and mutual corporations, municipal utilities, counties operating a system of sewerage and/or water, PUDs, gas companies, electrical companies, wastewater companies, and water companies must waive connection charges for properties used by a nonprofit organization, local agency, or any other legal entity that provides emergency shelters for homeless persons or victims of domestic violence who are homeless for personal safety reasons.

"Domestic violence" means the infliction or threat of physical harm against an intimate partner, and includes physical, sexual, and psychological abuse against the partner, and is a part of a pattern of assaultive, coercive, and controlling behaviors directed at achieving compliance from or control over that intimate partner.

"Homeless" means persons, including families who, for one particular day or night, do not have a safe shelter or sufficient funds to purchase or rent a place to stay.

"Emergency shelter" means any facility funded, in whole or in part, by state capital or operating dollars, programs of the housing finance commission, housing authorities or local government housing funds, the sole purpose of which is to provide temporary shelter for the homeless and which does not require occupants to sign leases or occupancy agreements.

**EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE (First Substitute):**

- Limits applicability to counties and cities that have declared a homelessness emergency.
- Limits the types of facilities to emergency homeless shelters only.
- Defines “homeless” as persons, including families who, for one particular day or night, do not have a safe shelter or sufficient funds to purchase or rent a place to stay.
- Defines “emergency shelter” as any facility funded, in whole or in part, by state capital or operating dollars, programs of the housing finance commission, housing authorities or local government housing funds, the sole purpose of which is to provide temporary shelter for the homeless and which does not require occupants to sign leases or occupancy agreements.

**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 on Original Bill:** *The committee recommended a different version of the bill than what was heard.* PRO: This bill will encourage groups who are building shelters for homeless persons and victims of domestic violence. There may be a few technical amendments to this bill. Kirkland supports this bill. A critical first step to address the homelessness crisis is to build more shelters.

OTHER: The word "connection" is broad and the bill is unclear as to which shelters this bill applies to. We are happy to work with stakeholders on clarifying language.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator Derek Stanford, Prime Sponsor; Penny Sweet, Mayor, City of Kirkland.

OTHER: Laura Wilkeson, Puget Sound Energy.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** No one.