
SENATE BILL 5712

State of Washington

67th Legislature

2022 Regular Session

By Senators Hasegawa and Nobles

Prefiled 01/06/22. Read first time 01/10/22. Referred to Committee on Housing & Local Government.

1 AN ACT Relating to the transparency of local taxing districts;
2 amending RCW 19.29A.030; adding a new section to chapter 35.58 RCW;
3 adding a new section to chapter 54.04 RCW; adding a new section to
4 chapter 85.08 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 36.58A RCW; adding
5 a new section to chapter 36.58 RCW; adding a new section to chapter
6 57.02 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 35.92 RCW; and creating a
7 new section.

8 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

9 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that all Washington
10 state residents are entitled to clear, transparent utility bills.
11 Many local jurisdictions impose utility taxes that utility providers
12 are required to collect. Residents deserve clear and transparent
13 bills, yet these utility taxes can be difficult or impossible to
14 discern on current utility billing statements. Considering the
15 rapidly escalating costs of housing, the legislature intends to
16 create transparency of utility bills for residents to better
17 understand this component of their housing costs.

18 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 35.58
19 RCW to read as follows:

1 Any metropolitan municipal corporation must disclose the rates of
2 each tax it collects on behalf of another political subdivision, if
3 any. Metropolitan municipal corporations must also disclose the
4 method by which the tax rates are applied to the relevant service
5 charges billed to the customer or taxpayer. The disclosures required
6 by this section must occur through at least one of the following
7 methods:

8 (1) On regular billing statements provided electronically or in
9 written form;

10 (2) On the corporation's website, if the corporation provides
11 written notice to customers or taxpayers that such information is
12 available on its website; or

13 (3) Through a billing insert, mailer, or other written or
14 electronic communication provided to customers or taxpayers on either
15 an annual basis or within 30 days of the effective date of any
16 subsequent tax rate change.

17 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 54.04
18 RCW to read as follows:

19 Any public utility district must disclose the rates of each tax
20 it collects on behalf of another political subdivision, if any.
21 Public utility districts must also disclose the method by which the
22 tax rates are applied to the relevant service charges billed to the
23 customer or taxpayer. The disclosures required by this section must
24 occur through at least one of the following methods:

25 (1) On regular billing statements provided electronically or in
26 written form;

27 (2) On the district's website, if the district provides written
28 notice to customers or taxpayers that such information is available
29 on its website; or

30 (3) Through a billing insert, mailer, or other written or
31 electronic communication provided to customers or taxpayers on either
32 an annual basis or within 30 days of the effective date of any
33 subsequent tax rate change.

34 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** A new section is added to chapter 85.08
35 RCW to read as follows:

36 Any diking, drainage, and sewerage improvement district must
37 disclose the rates of each tax it collects on behalf of another
38 political subdivision, if any. Diking, drainage, and sewerage

1 improvement districts must also disclose the method by which the tax
2 rates are applied to the relevant service charges billed to the
3 customer or taxpayer. The disclosures required by this section must
4 occur through at least one of the following methods:

5 (1) On regular billing statements provided electronically or in
6 written form;

7 (2) On the district's website, if the district provides written
8 notice to customers or taxpayers that such information is available
9 on its website; or

10 (3) Through a billing insert, mailer, or other written or
11 electronic communication provided to customers or taxpayers on either
12 an annual basis or within 30 days of the effective date of any
13 subsequent tax rate change.

14 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** A new section is added to chapter 36.58A
15 RCW to read as follows:

16 Any solid waste collection district must disclose the rates of
17 each tax it collects on behalf of another political subdivision, if
18 any. Solid waste collection districts must also disclose the method
19 by which the tax rates are applied to the relevant service charges
20 billed to the customer or taxpayer. The disclosures required by this
21 section must occur through at least one of the following methods:

22 (1) On regular billing statements provided electronically or in
23 written form;

24 (2) On the district's website, if the district provides written
25 notice to customers or taxpayers that such information is available
26 on its website; or

27 (3) Through a billing insert, mailer, or other written or
28 electronic communication provided to customers or taxpayers on either
29 an annual basis or within 30 days of the effective date of any
30 subsequent tax rate change.

31 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** A new section is added to chapter 36.58
32 RCW to read as follows:

33 Any solid waste disposal district must disclose the rates of each
34 tax it collects on behalf of another political subdivision, if any.
35 Solid waste disposal districts must also disclose the method by which
36 the tax rates are applied to the relevant service charges billed to
37 the customer or taxpayer. The disclosures required by this section
38 must occur through at least one of the following methods:

1 (1) On regular billing statements provided electronically or in
2 written form;

3 (2) On the district's website, if the district provides written
4 notice to customers or taxpayers that such information is available
5 on its website; or

6 (3) Through a billing insert, mailer, or other written or
7 electronic communication provided to customers or taxpayers on either
8 an annual basis or within 30 days of the effective date of any
9 subsequent tax rate change.

10 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7.** A new section is added to chapter 57.02
11 RCW to read as follows:

12 Any water-sewer district must disclose the rates of each tax it
13 collects on behalf of another political subdivision, if any. Water-
14 sewer districts must also disclose the method by which the tax rates
15 are applied to the relevant service charges billed to the customer or
16 taxpayer. The disclosures required by this section must occur through
17 at least one of the following methods:

18 (1) On regular billing statements provided electronically or in
19 written form;

20 (2) On the district's website, if the district provides written
21 notice to customers or taxpayers that such information is available
22 on its website; or

23 (3) Through a billing insert, mailer, or other written or
24 electronic communication provided to customers or taxpayers on either
25 an annual basis or within 30 days of the effective date of any
26 subsequent tax rate change.

27 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 8.** A new section is added to chapter 35.92
28 RCW to read as follows:

29 Any city or town operating as a municipal utility must disclose
30 the rates of each tax it collects on behalf of another political
31 subdivision, if any. Municipal utilities must also disclose the
32 method by which the tax rates are applied to the relevant service
33 charges billed to the customer or taxpayer. The disclosures required
34 by this section must occur through at least one of the following
35 methods:

36 (1) On regular billing statements provided electronically or in
37 written form;

1 (2) On the municipal utility's website, if it provides written
2 notice to customers or taxpayers that such information is available
3 on its website; or

4 (3) Through a billing insert, mailer, or other written or
5 electronic communication provided to customers or taxpayers on either
6 an annual basis or within 30 days of the effective date of any
7 subsequent tax rate change.

8 **Sec. 9.** RCW 19.29A.030 and 1998 c 300 s 4 are each amended to
9 read as follows:

10 Except as otherwise provided in RCW 19.29A.040, an electric
11 utility (~~shall~~) must:

12 (1) Provide notice to all of its retail electric customers that
13 the disclosures required in RCW 19.29A.020 are available without
14 charge upon request. Such notice (~~shall~~) must be provided at the
15 time service is established and either included as a prominent part
16 of each customer's bill or in a written notice mailed to each
17 customer at least once a year thereafter. Required disclosures
18 (~~shall~~) must be provided without charge, in writing using plain
19 language that is understandable to an ordinary customer, and
20 presented in a form that is clear and conspicuous(~~ly~~);

21 (2) Provide written or electronic notice of public hearings where
22 changes in electricity rates will be considered or approved by the
23 commission or governing body, in a form and manner as may be required
24 by the commission or governing body;

25 (3) Disclose on each billing statement the rate of tax imposed
26 upon the electric utility under RCW 35.21.870, if any, and the amount
27 of such tax to be paid directly by the retail electric customer
28 through the billing statement; and

29 (4) Disclose the following information in a prominent manner on
30 all billing statements sent to retail electric customers, or by a
31 separate written notice mailed to all retail electric customers at
32 least quarterly and at the same time as a billing statement: "YOUR
33 BILL INCLUDES CHARGES FOR ELECTRICITY, DELIVERY SERVICES, GENERAL
34 ADMINISTRATION AND OVERHEAD, METERING, TAXES, CONSERVATION EXPENSES,
35 AND OTHER ITEMS.

--- END ---