

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1978

As Passed House:

February 6, 2024

Title: An act relating to the addition of special purpose and junior taxing districts to the intrastate mutual aid system.

Brief Description: Adding special purpose and junior taxing districts to the intrastate mutual aid system.

Sponsors: Representatives Rule, Volz, Ryu, Ramel, Ormsby and Reeves; by request of Military Department.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Innovation, Community & Economic Development, & Veterans: 1/9/24, 1/16/24 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/6/24, 97-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Includes special purpose districts and junior taxing districts in the member jurisdictions of the Intrastate Mutual Aid System.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON INNOVATION, COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, & VETERANS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 15 members: Representatives Ryu, Chair; Donaghy, Vice Chair; Rule, Vice Chair; Volz, Ranking Minority Member; Barnard, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Caldier, Chambers, Christian, Cortes, Paul, Senn, Shavers, Street, Waters and Wilcox.

Staff: Martha Wehling (786-7067).

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

Background:

Mutual Aid.

"Mutual aid" is a term in organizational theory used to signify a voluntary reciprocal exchange of resources and services for mutual benefit. In emergency services, mutual aid is an agreement among emergency responders to lend assistance across jurisdictional boundaries. This may occur due to an emergency response that exceeds local resources, such as a disaster or multiple-alarm fire. Mutual aid may be *ad hoc* and requested only when such an emergency occurs. It may also be a formal standing agreement for cooperative emergency management on a continuing basis, such as ensuring that resources are dispatched from the nearest fire station, regardless of which side of the jurisdictional boundary the incident is on. Various state and local governmental entities in Washington are involved in emergency management and preparedness.

Intrastate Mutual Aid System.

Washington's Intrastate Mutual Aid System was established in 2011 to provide mutual assistance in an emergency among political subdivisions and federally recognized Indian tribes that choose to participate. Member jurisdictions may request mutual assistance for: (1) response, mitigation, or recovery activities related to an emergency; or (2) participation in drills or exercises in preparing for an emergency.

Member Jurisdictions.

Member jurisdictions of the Intrastate Mutual Aid System include political subdivisions and certain federally recognized Indian tribes. Political subdivisions are member jurisdictions unless the jurisdiction provides a resolution or ordinance to the Military Department electing not to participate in the Intrastate Mutual Aid System. Membership includes every county, city, and town and, since 2016, the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation.

Summary of Bill:

Special purpose districts and junior taxing districts are included as member jurisdictions of the Intrastate Mutual Aid System. A special purpose district or junior taxing district that elects not to participate in the Intrastate Mutual Aid System will be released from membership after providing the Military Department with a resolution or ordinance.

Special purpose districts include municipal and quasi-municipal corporations other than counties, cities, and towns. These municipal corporations include water-sewer districts, fire protection districts, port districts, public utility districts, county park and recreation service areas, flood control zone districts, diking districts, drainage improvement districts, and solid waste collection districts. Industrial development districts created by port districts, local improvement districts, utility local improvement districts, and road improvement districts

are not special purpose districts.

Junior taxing districts include all taxing districts other than the state, counties, road districts, cities, towns, port districts, and public utility districts.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The inclusion of special purpose districts and junior taxing districts to the member jurisdictions eligible to participate in the Washington Intrastate Mutual Aid System allows coordination across jurisdictions so that people who are helpers are ready and can work together smoothly and efficiently. Member participation can include personnel, supplies, and equipment for disasters and assistance in exercises to prepare for disasters.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Alicia Rule, prime sponsor; and Sharon Wallace, Washington Military Department, Emergency Management Division.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.