

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESB 6087

As Passed House - Amended:

March 1, 2024

Title: An act relating to the fire service training account.

Brief Description: Concerning the fire service training account.

Sponsors: Senators King, Lovick and Mullet; by request of Washington State Patrol.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Appropriations: 2/22/24, 2/26/24 [DPA].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/1/24, 96-0.

Brief Summary of Engrossed Bill
(As Amended by House)

- Increases the percentage of fire insurance premium taxes that are deposited into the Fire Service Training Account from 20 percent to 25 percent.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 29 members: Representatives Ormsby, Chair; Bergquist, Vice Chair; Gregerson, Vice Chair; Macri, Vice Chair; Corry, Ranking Minority Member; Chambers, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Connors, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Couture, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Berg, Callan, Chopp, Davis, Fitzgibbon, Harris, Lekanoff, Pollet, Riccelli, Rude, Ryu, Sandlin, Schmick, Senn, Simmons, Slatter, Springer, Stokesbary, Stonier, Tharinger and Wilcox.

Staff: Emily Stephens (786-7157).

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:

Fire Insurance Premiums.

A tax is collected on fire insurance premiums. Taxes collected on fire insurance premiums are distributed in the following manner:

- 40 percent to the Volunteer Firefighters' Relief and Pension Principal Fund;
- 25 percent to the Firefighters' Pension Fund;
- 20 percent to the Fire Service Training Account (Account); and
- 15 percent to the State General Fund.

Fire Service Training Account.

In addition to fire insurance premium taxes, revenue into the Account consists of:

- fees received by the Washington State Patrol (WSP) for fire service training;
- revenue from penalties collected from certain violations of the State Building Code related to fire and smoke control systems testing;
- grants and bequests received by the WSP; and
- State General Fund amounts appropriated into the Account by the Legislature.

The Account may be used for fire service training; school fire prevention activities within the WSP; maintenance, operations, and capital projects of the State Fire Training Academy; and the operation of the Firefighter Joint Apprenticeship Training Program.

Summary of Amended Bill:

Twenty-five percent of fire insurance premium taxes received by the state are deposited into the Account.

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) Without this bill, funding for fire service will fall short, which could result in a reduction in basic fire service training or the elimination of advanced training. The current funding model is not able to sustain fire service activities. Volunteer and career firefighters might see a reduction in career opportunities without this bill. Over the last decade, only 3 percent of the State Fire Marshal's Office (SFMO) funding has been approved. If the bill increased the proportion of fire insurance premium taxes deposited into the Account to 25 percent, the SFMO could add apprenticeship training.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Kelly Merz, Washington State Patrol; and Bud Sizemore, Washington State Council of Fire Fighters.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.