

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESHB 1835

As of February 12, 2024

Title: An act relating to defining frontier counties.

Brief Description: Defining frontier counties.

Sponsors: House Committee on Innovation, Community & Economic Development, & Veterans (originally sponsored by Representatives Kretz, Chapman, Maycumber, Tharinger, Harris and Dent).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/9/24, 94-3.

Committee Activity: Local Government, Land Use & Tribal Affairs: 2/15/24.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Adds a definition of frontier county to statutes governing public facilities grants and loans, excise taxes, and the Department of Commerce.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT, LAND USE & TRIBAL AFFAIRS

Staff: Maggie Douglas (786-7279)

Background: A rural county is defined as a county with a population density less than 100 persons per square mile or a county smaller than 225 square miles, as determined by the Office of Financial Management. Several statutes use this definition for tax and other assistance programs, including but not limited to statutes referencing public facilities loans and grants, the coordination of community and economic development services, and excise taxes. Currently, there are 30 counties that meet the rural county definition.

Summary of Bill: The definition of frontier county is added to the statutes governing public facilities grants and loans, excise taxes, and the Department of Commerce. A frontier county is defined as a county with a population density of fewer than 50 persons per square

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.

mile. A frontier one county has a population density of 21 or fewer persons per square mile. A frontier two county has a population density of more than 21 but fewer than 50 persons per square mile.

A frontier county is also a rural county and is eligible for all benefits, services, and programs available to a rural county, unless specifically excluded.

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.