

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1122

AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON ECOLOGY & PARKS, FEBRUARY 22, 1994

**Brief Description:** Changing provisions relating to excess levies in park and recreation districts and service areas.

**SPONSORS:** House Committee on Local Government (originally sponsored by Representatives Pruitt, Schmidt, Zellinsky, H. Myers, Thomas, Dunshee, Valle, R. Meyers, Basich, Brough and Quall)

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ECOLOGY & PARKS

**Majority Report:** Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Fraser, Chairman; Deccio, McCaslin, Moore, Morton, Sutherland and Talmadge.

**Staff:** Cathy Baker (786-7708)

**Hearing Dates:** March 19, 1993; March 24, 1993; February 22, 1994

**BACKGROUND:**

Property Tax Levies. Regular property tax levies are property taxes subject to the constitutional 1 percent limitation on cumulative property taxes that may be imposed on any property. Statutes permit most regular property tax levies to be imposed without voter approval, although a few regular property tax levies may be imposed only if authorized by voters.

Excess property tax levies are property tax levies that are imposed above, or in excess of, the constitutional 1 percent limitation on cumulative regular property tax levies. Except for non-voter approved tax levies by port districts and public utility districts, all excess levies must be approved by voters by a 60 percent affirmative vote, with a 40 percent validation requirement. Most taxing districts are authorized to impose both single year excess property tax levies that may be used for any operating or capital purpose of the taxing district and multiple year excess levies used to retire general indebtedness issued for capital purposes.

Park and Recreation Districts. A park and recreation district is a special district authorized to provide park and recreation improvements. The governing body of a park and recreation district is a directly elected five-member board of commissioners.

Park and recreation districts are taxing districts authorized to impose both types of voter approved excess property tax levies, as well as voter approved regular property tax levies.

Voters of a park and recreation district may approve a ballot proposition authorizing the district to impose regular property tax levies at a rate of up to 15 cents per \$1,000 of assessed valuation each year for five consecutive years. The ballot proposition authorizing the levies must be approved by a 60 percent vote with a 40 percent validation requirement even though these are regular levies and not excess levies.

Park and Recreation Service Areas. A park and recreation service area is a special district authorized to provide park and recreation improvements and facilities. The county legislative authority of the county in which a service area is located acts in an ex officio capacity as the governing body of a service area.

Service areas are taxing districts authorized to impose both types of voter approved excess levies, as well as voter approved regular property tax levies. Voters of a service area may approve a ballot proposition authorizing the service area to impose regular property tax levies at a rate of 15 cents per \$1,000 of assessed valuation each year for six consecutive years. The ballot proposition authorizing the levies must be approved by a 60 percent vote with a 40 percent validation requirement even though these are regular property tax levies and not excess levies.

**SUMMARY:**

Statutes are clarified that a park and recreation district or park and recreation service area may impose more than one excess levy if authorized by voters.

Voter approved regular property tax levies of park and recreation districts and park and recreation service areas are altered to increase the maximum annual rate from 15 cents to 75 cents per \$1,000 of assessed valuation. The number of years that voters may authorize a park and recreation district to impose its regular levies is increased by one year to a total of six years.

**SUMMARY OF PROPOSED COMMITTEE AMENDMENT:**

The regular property tax levies of park and recreation districts and park and recreation service areas are only increased to 60 cents per \$1,000 of assessed valuation.

**Appropriation:** none

**Revenue:** none

**Fiscal Note:** available

**TESTIMONY FOR:**

Will allow a more stable tax rate and funding base from year to year. Will reduce election costs.

**TESTIMONY AGAINST:** None

**TESTIFIED:** Chuck Field, Bainbridge Island Park District, WA Park  
and Recreation Assn.