



**WASHINGTON  
FIRE CHIEFS**

# LEGISLATIVE DAY PRIORITIES 2025



## **ESTABLISHING THE FIRE SERVICE POLICY BOARD TO ADVISE THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE**

**SUPPORT HB 1628**, sponsored by Reps. Dan Bronoske (D-28) & Dan Griffey (R-35), which would re-establish a Fire Service Policy Board, consisting of representatives from the five primary fire service entities in the state - the Chiefs, Commissioners, Fire Marshals, State Council of FF, & Volunteer. The Fire Service voice within the SFMO has been lacking since the dissolution of the original policy board during the Great Recession. The office has been deprioritized & underfunded, with only 3.4% of budget requests from the SFMO ultimately funded. Fire service training for both career & volunteer firefighters has suffered, & important functions like arson investigations have been ignored altogether. Establishing this Board to advise the SFMO is critical to ensuring fire service resources & training are prioritized moving forward.

**Received a public hearing in the House State Government Committee on 2/4.**



## **PREPOSITIONING OF MOBILIZATION RESOURCES**

**SUPPORT HB 1271**, sponsored by Reps. Greg Nance (D-23), Tom Dent (R-13) & many others, which would codify a program that has succeeded as a pilot project in the last four years to allow all-hazard mobilization resources to be prepositioned ahead of an impending wildfire or other incident. As a result of recent legislative budget provisos, pre-positioned mobilization teams & DNR were successful in minimizing fire growth in Kittitas County (2023), Yakima County (2023 & 2024), Klickitat (2024), & Spokane County (2024). Proactively responding & extinguishing fires saves money, minimizes damage, & allows firefighting resources to be used more efficiently in the protection of our great State.

**Passed unanimously from the House Technology Committee on 1/31.**



## **BEHAVIORAL HEALTH EMERGENCY RESPONSE TRAINING & REIMBURSEMENT**

**SUPPORT HB 1809**, sponsored by Reps. Greg Nance (D-23), Dan Griffey (R-35) & Lauren Davis (D-32), which aims to improve behavioral health engagement from first responders by establishing a voluntary advanced training for fire/EMS in behavioral health emergencies that leads to an endorsement called EMS-BH (available to both EMTs & medics). The bill mandates Medicaid reimbursement for departments that employ EMS-BH's, & establishes four pilot sites across the state to work on coordination, billing, & training strategies related to BH crisis response- & make recommendations to the legislature for changes.

**Awaits a public hearing in the House Health Care & Wellness Committee.**



## STABLE FUNDING & REVENUE

**SUPPORT HB 1334**, sponsored by Rep. Gerry Pollet (D-46), which would modify the annual regular property tax revenue growth limit. The current 1% cap creates a structural deficit in local government budgets, causing many to struggle with funding critical community needs. The cap reduces the ability to respond to emerging issues & diminishes capacity to serve our growing population. Allowing local officials the option to raise their property taxes to keep up with inflation (but never more than 3% without the vote of the people) puts the power back into our communities.

Awaits a public hearing in the House Finance Committee.



## STABLE FUNDING & REVENUE

**OPPOSE HB 1042**, sponsored by Rep. Sharon Wylie (D-49), which would authorize county treasurers to seek "cost recovery" from junior taxing districts to administer their legally-mandated duties to administer property tax collections for taxing districts in their jurisdiction. This bill would unfairly shift financial responsibility from counties to special taxing districts, placing an undue burden on local fire service agencies & other local government partners.

Awaits a public hearing in the House Finance Committee.



## STABLE FUNDING & REVENUE

**OPPOSE HB 1786**, sponsored by Rep. Mike Volz (R-6), which would expand the current tax increment financing (TIF) statute to allow cities, counties, & ports more flexibility to divert revenue from fire districts for projects unrelated to the fire district's mission. TIF has become a popular tool by some cities, counties, & ports to help spur economic development; however, the negative impacts on fire & other junior taxing districts are too often ignored. Expanding the allowable uses of TIF would move our state in the wrong direction & would create incentives for more jurisdictions to redirect fire service dollars to unrelated projects.

Awaits a public hearing in the House Finance Committee.



## PROTECTING PENSION STABILITY

**OPPOSE SB 5085**, sponsored by Senator June Robinson (D-38), which would merge the assets, liabilities, and membership of LEOFF 1 with PERS 1 & TERS 1 into a new "Legacy Retirement System" that would allow for a cost-of-living adjustment for PERS & TERS Plan 1 members. Specific concerns have been raised about the fact this hasn't gone through the Select Committee on Pension Policy or the LEOFF board, that it is unclear if this would meet with IRS approval (which could take years to determine & create uncertainty moving forward), & the actuarial analysis says the Legacy Fund would be less than 100% funded. Picking winners & losers with state pensions is not the way to respect our law enforcement officers & firefighters that earned a LEOFF 1 retirement.

Received a hearing in Senate Ways & Means on 1/23 & awaits further action.



## VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

**SUPPORT HB 1156**, sponsored by Reps. Mike Steele (R-12), Timm Ormsby (D-3), & Alicia Hill (D-3). The bill enables volunteer firefighters whose firefighting agency has joined the Washington State Deferred Compensation Program (DCP) to participate in the DCP. The number of volunteer firefighters is declining, & this bill will create an incentive for potential new volunteers. This minor bonus would provide something beyond the \$350 per month pension benefit volunteers currently receive, & will have a low impact on the system.

Passed unanimously from the House Appropriations Committee on 1/27 and awaits action to bring it to the floor for a vote.