



## **HB -1136 EMS Levy Cap Increase**

### **Background**

RCW 84.52.069 authorizes an EMS levy up to \$.50 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation to provide local emergency medical services. The initial authorization of an EMS Levy must include the desired amount of the levy, and the statement of the levy period (6 years, 10 years, or permanent in nature). Passage requires a 60% favorable vote, with a 40% validation of voter turnout. EMS levies are subject to the same 1% limitation annually as are all other property taxes.

### **Identified Problem**

The cap for EMS levies, which provides funds to local jurisdictions relative to the provision of emergency life safety efforts, has been capped at 50 cents for over 13 years, and has only been raised once since its inception in 1979. With budgets being extremely tight relative to public safety these days, it only makes sense to allow the local citizenry another option regarding maintaining or enhancing emergency medical services.

### **Purpose of Legislation**

This bill would raise the cap for EMS levies from \$.50 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation to \$.75. Any increase would still be subject to voter approval, but the increase would allow another tool for local governments with respect to public safety funding.

### **Full Support from the Fire Service**

All fire service organization in Washington State, including the Washington State Council of Firefighters, the Washington Fire Commissioners Association, and the Washington State Firefighters Association, are joining with the Fire Chiefs in support of this critical legislation.

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**The Washington Fire Chiefs Association urges your support of this important legislation.**