

SB 5520: Establish a Single City RFA Talking Points

- Since 2007 there have been several successful RFAs created in Washington but the law isn't feasible for every jurisdiction.
- Barriers to creation of RFAs are:
 - Dissimilar taxing rates between two jurisdictions
 - Different levels of service
 - Varying staffing levels
 - Varying revenue levels for fire departments that are augmented with additional revenue from a city's general fund
- The creation of a single city RFA would allow for the fire department budget to be isolated and not affected by other services such as competition for revenue with parks.
- Because RFAs and Fire Protection Districts are more closely related in structure than cities and Fire Protection Districts, future attempts to merge will be streamlined.
- This is not a hostile takeover. The planning committee required to create a RFA must be established by the city council.
- It is not a duplication of taxing authority. The taxing authority formerly allowed in the city transfers to the new RFA.
- The governing body of the RFA is designed by the planning committee and may include elected city officials and/or independently elected fire commissioners, it's up to the voters and the planning committee.
- Allows for the establishment of a Fire Benefit Charge (FBC).
 - A FBC allows for charges proportional to the response force required by a particular occupancy and lowers the tax rate by \$0.50/thousand.
 - Incentivizes positive actions, such as installing sprinkler systems or fire alarms, by providing discounts in the FBC.
 - Protects public safety by insulating a significant portion of the budget from the effects of recession and proration that sometimes occurs