

**December 16, 2011**

**Washington Fire Chiefs Legislative Committee Report**

**Fire Chief Wayne Senter, Chair**

The following is an update of those bills and activities that relate to our priority legislation issues. To listen to testimony on our bills, go to <http://www.tvw.org> type in the bill number using the legacy version in the find box, hit enter and then click on watch video. Click on the bill numbers in this report to go directly to bill details.

**2012 Legislative Priorities**

**Top 5 Issues**

* EMS simple majority elections (50% plus 1) for EMS (Emergency Medical Services) Levies and Benefit Charge elections.

A bill has been developed and the WFCA will take the lead on the EMS simple majority election. This looks like it would not require a constitutional amendment. An off-shoot of this subject includes a simple majority for M&O levies. A bill has been drafted but it requires a constitutional change which may impede progress at this time.

* Funding for State Fire Training Academy at North Bend, WA.

A bill has been drafted, still some discussion on the importance of a 50% limitation within the bill. We would support the bill either way.

* Volunteer pension benefits & eligibility.

There are three issues on this subject and we support all three. The first is formalizing the expansion of the definition of volunteer Firefighter as it is applied today. The second is establishing a “reserve officer” disability system for non-traditional volunteers. The third is a credit service buy-back option.

* CBRNE: funded regional hazardous materials incident response teams.

We have drafted a letter to formally put this issue on hold, at the last WSFSLF meeting all of the fire service leaders agreed to co-sign that letter. That will happen this week and will be posted on the WFC Legislative share point site when completed.

* Labor Law Issue (mediation & arbitration, workplace safety)

We continue to monitor this issue, especially in the area of L&I fines as it relates to workplace safety. Any and all suggested solutions have been and will be considered by the WFC Legislative committee.

**Budget Issues:**

* EMT/PM fee increases proposed in [HB 2141](http://apps.leg.wa.gov/billinfo/summary.aspx?bill=2141&year=2011), Hearing held last week which can be heard at: <http://www2.tvw.org/media/mediaplayer.cfm?evid=2011120061&TYPE=V&CFID=2236007&CFTOKEN=70086593&bhcp=1>

The general consensus at the hearing was that this would impact service especially where volunteers are the predominate providers. Port Angeles Fire Chief McKeen prepared a very good letter outlining that problem. (see documents on WFC legislative section share point site).

At our last meeting it was a consensus that we continue to fight this, exempting volunteers, set any fee cap, emphasize the importance of the EMS simple majority and to look to reorganize for real efficiencies within DOH including certification, regions, discipline etc.

* LEOFF pension funding, plans are in the works to only fund what the actuary determines to be needed, rather than our current approach of consistent stabilized funding

**Other Issues:**

* The LEOFF pension merger study is out for review. See <http://osa.leg.wa.gov/Actuarial_Services/Publications/PDF_Docs/Pension_Studies/11LEOFFMergStudy.pdf> HB 2097 is still alive from the 2010 legislative session. We will follow and see if it is reintroduced.
* Chlorinated TRIS Flame Retardants legislation being developed
* Liability Changes for Medicaid Fraud being developed SB 5978
* The regular legislative session of 60 days starts on January 9, 2012.
* No Mans Land, amendment has been developed to better define improved properties.