2015 WFCA Legislative Report

The Washington Fire Commissioners Association Legislative Committee met numerous times during the interim and at its December 5, 2014 meeting, finalized its priorities for the upcoming session which will commence on Monday, January 12, 2015.

The state legislature and the Governor will again be faced with very difficult decisions which may have impacts on local governments and the citizens they represent. We will diligently monitor all bills and will keep you updated with email reports every Friday beginning January 23, 2015. We will continue to be in a defensive position to protect what we currently have.

2015 WFCA Priority Issues

- Propose and support legislation to provide regional basic fire service training through the State Fire Marshal at no cost to the fire districts/departments/RFAs. Bill will be pre-filed this month.
- Support “All Risk Mobilization” to provide assurances that fire districts/departments/RFAs can respond and be assured that reimbursement will be provided through current fire mobilization procedures.
- Support $18 million in funding to improve and build new facilities at the State Fire Training Academy at North Bend. This will be a capital budget issue/proviso.
- Protect fire district/department/RFA tax authority from being taken by the state for school/operational budget.

The issues outlined below will be closely monitored in 2015:
- Support WFC proposed legislation to increase the EMS levy from .50 up to .75.
- Oppose “raiding” of E-911 Statewide Funds.
- Support regional fire authority legislation as proposed.
- Oppose EMT/vehicle licensing fees if proposed.
- Support modification of criteria for interest arbitration panel.
- Support full funding of all public pensions.
- Monitor and take positions on all property tax proposals for cost impacts to fire districts/departments/RFAs. This will be a hot button issue as tax relief for property owners will be advocated by the legislature.
- State Agency Legislation. The WFCA will monitor and take appropriate positions on state agency legislation, such as: BVFF, Dept. of Health, Dept. of Revenue, Dept. of Natural Resources, State Treasurer, State Auditor, Insurance Commissioner, State Patrol and Dept. of Retirement Systems.
- Sunshine Legislation. The WFCA will monitor and take appropriate positions on any amendments to the Open Public Records Act and/or Open Public Meetings Act. Some issues we have identified and oppose as adverse legislation include:
  - Public records/meetings notice through local government websites.
  - Erosion of protection of attorney/client privilege for local elected officials.
  - Mandatory recording of executive sessions.