
SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1999

State of Washington

65th Legislature

2018 Regular Session

By House State Government, Elections & Information Technology
(originally sponsored by Representatives Gregerson, Stokesbary, Ryu,
Hudgins, Cody, Pollet, Santos, Senn, Springer, Fitzgibbon, McBride,
Stanford, Kagi, and Slatter)

1 AN ACT Relating to elections in port districts that are
2 coextensive with a county having a population of over one-half
3 million; amending RCW 53.12.010; and creating a new section.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that port districts
6 in large counties serve a diverse population of different communities
7 with a wide range of political interests and economic circumstance.
8 Such communities deserve a voice in the important decisions of the
9 port district that affect their community and personal lives. The
10 legislature further finds that the current at-large election system
11 of port commissioners does not serve many of these diverse
12 communities' interests in large districts. The legislature therefore
13 intends to authorize a district-based election system to expand the
14 representation and promote the participation for all communities on
15 the port commission.

16 **Sec. 2.** RCW 53.12.010 and 2002 c 51 s 1 are each amended to read
17 as follows:

18 (1) The powers of the port district shall be exercised through a
19 port commission consisting of three or five members, (~~when~~) or as
20 otherwise permitted by this title(~~(, five members)~~).

1 (a) Every port district that is not coextensive with a county
2 having a population of five hundred thousand or more shall be divided
3 into the same number of commissioner districts as there are
4 commissioner positions, each having approximately equal population,
5 unless provided otherwise under subsection (2) of this section.

6 (b) Where a port district with three commissioner positions is
7 coextensive with the boundaries of a county that has a population of
8 less than five hundred thousand and the county has three county
9 legislative authority districts, the port commissioner districts
10 shall be the county legislative authority districts.

11 (c) In other instances where a port district is divided into
12 commissioner districts, the port commission shall divide the port
13 district into commissioner districts unless the commissioner
14 districts have been described pursuant to RCW 53.04.031. The
15 commissioner districts shall be altered as provided in chapter 53.16
16 RCW.

17 (d) Commissioner districts shall be used as follows: ~~((a))~~ (i)
18 Only a registered voter who resides in a commissioner district may be
19 a candidate for, or hold office as, a commissioner of the
20 commissioner district; and ~~((b))~~ (ii) only the voters of a
21 commissioner district may vote at a primary to nominate candidates
22 for a commissioner of the commissioner district. Except as provided
23 in subsection (3) of this section, voters of the entire port district
24 may vote at a general election to elect a person as a commissioner of
25 the commissioner district.

26 (2)(a) In port districts with five commissioners, two of the
27 commissioner districts may include the entire port district if
28 approved by the voters of the district either at the time of
29 formation or at a subsequent port district election at which the
30 issue is proposed pursuant to a resolution adopted by the board of
31 commissioners and delivered to the county auditor.

32 (b) In a port district with five commissioners, where two of the
33 commissioner districts include the entire port district, the port
34 district may be divided into five commissioner districts if proposed
35 pursuant to a resolution adopted by the board of commissioners or
36 pursuant to a petition by the voters and approved by the voters of
37 the district at the next general or special election occurring sixty
38 or more days after the adoption of the resolution. A petition
39 proposing such an increase must be submitted to the county auditor of
40 the county in which the port district is located and signed by voters

1 of the port district at least equal in number to ten percent of the
2 number of voters in the port district who voted at the last general
3 election.

4 Upon approval by the voters, the commissioner district boundaries
5 shall be redrawn into five districts within one hundred twenty days
6 and submitted to the county auditor pursuant to RCW 53.16.015. The
7 new commissioner districts shall be numbered one through five and the
8 three incumbent commissioners representing the three former districts
9 shall represent commissioner districts one through three. The two at
10 large incumbent commissioners shall represent commissioner districts
11 four and five. If, as a result of redrawing the district boundaries,
12 more than one of the incumbent commissioners resides in one of the
13 new commissioner districts, the commissioners who reside in the same
14 commissioner district shall determine by lot which of the numbered
15 commissioner districts they shall represent for the remainder of
16 their respective terms.

17 (3)(a) Beginning in 2019, any port district with five members
18 that is coextensive with a county having a population of over one and
19 one-half million, and with a legislative authority of nine members,
20 must be divided into the same commissioner districts as the county
21 legislative authority districts and include the same number of
22 commissioner positions as the county legislative authority.

23 (b) Each commissioner must reside in the district from which he
24 or she is elected, and only voters from each district may elect the
25 commissioner to fill that district's commissioner position. No
26 commissioner position may be elected at large.

27 (c) Each commissioner elected prior to 2019 with at least two
28 years remaining in his or her term may complete his or her term for
29 the new commissioner district in which he or she resides. If, as a
30 result of redrawing the district boundaries, more than one of the
31 incumbent commissioners, with at least two years remaining on each of
32 their terms, reside in one of the new commissioner districts, the
33 commissioners who reside in the same commissioner district shall
34 determine by lot which commissioner will represent the district for
35 the remainder of the term.

36 (d) The initial election under this subsection (3) will include
37 the election of positions in each of the remaining district positions
38 as follows:

39 (i) A certain number of positions elected to serve an initial
40 two-year term, which in addition to any incumbent commissioner's

1 position, as established in (c) of this subsection (3), provide a
2 total number of four positions that will expire at the end of 2021;
3 and

4 (ii) Five positions elected to serve four-year terms.

5 (e) The county auditor must select which district positions will
6 be two-year or four-year terms for the initial election, pursuant to
7 (d) of this subsection. All subsequent terms for all positions must
8 be for four-year terms.

9 (f) Each commissioner must receive the same salary as a member of
10 the state legislature, as set under RCW 43.03.013.

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