

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5355

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Government Operations, Tribal Relations & Elections, February 15, 2011

Title: An act relating to special meetings.

Brief Description: Regarding notice requirements for special meetings of public agencies.

Sponsors: Senators Morton, Swecker and Honeyford.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Government Operations, Tribal Relations & Elections: 2/07/11, 2/15/11 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS, TRIBAL RELATIONS & ELECTIONS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5355 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Pridemore, Chair; Swecker, Ranking Minority Member; Benton, Chase, Nelson and Roach.

Staff: Sharon Swanson (786-7447)

Background: The Open Public Meetings Act governs the meeting process followed by public agencies. A special meeting may be called by the presiding officer of the governing body of a public agency or by a majority of the members of the governing body by delivering written notice personally, by mail, fax, or electronic mail, to each local newspaper of general circulation, and to each local radio or television which has requested to be notified of special meetings.

Notice must occur at least 24 hours before the meeting. The notice must indicate the meeting's time and place, and specify the business to be transacted.

Summary of Bill (Recommended Substitute): Written notice of a special meeting is deemed waived when a member submits a written waiver of notice with the clerk or secretary of the governing body at or prior to the time the meeting convenes or a member is actually present at the time the meeting convenes. A written waiver may be sent by telegram, fax, or electronic mail.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

In addition to existing requirements, notice of a special meeting must be:

- posted on an agency's website, if any; and
- prominently displayed at the main entrance of the agency's principal location and the meeting site if it is not held at the agency's principal location.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS, TRIBAL RELATIONS & ELECTIONS COMMITTEE (Recommended Substitute): Removes the requirement that notice of a special meeting be delivered to individuals who reside in a voting district for which a governing body has fewer than 1000 registered voters and who have a written request to be notified of special meetings on file with the governing body.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill: OTHER: The purpose of the bill is good, but the provision that personal notice be given to up to 1000 people may have a huge economic impact on a smaller jurisdiction.

Persons Testifying: OTHER: Ramsey Ramerman, Association of Washington Cities.