

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 2325

AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS,  
FEBRUARY 25, 1994

**Brief Description:** Revising procedures for changing the plan of government for cities and towns.

**SPONSORS:** House Committee on Local Government (originally sponsored by Representatives Edmondson, H. Myers and Springer)

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS**

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Haugen, Chairman; Drew, Vice Chairman; Loveland, McCaslin, Oke, Owen and Winsley.

**Staff:** Diane Smith (786-7410)

**Hearing Dates:** February 22, 1994; February 25, 1994

**BACKGROUND:** Cities and towns are divided into the following classifications:

- \* First class city means a city with population of 10,000 or more operating under a city charter approved by city voters;
- \* Second class city means a city with a population of 10,000 or more when the city incorporated or reorganized, that is not a code city;
- \* Third class city means a city with a population of 1,500 to less than 10,000 when the city incorporated or reorganized, that is not a code city;
- \* Town means a municipal corporation with a population less than 1,500 when the entity incorporated or reorganized, that is not a code city;
- \* Code city means a city that either incorporated as a code city or reorganized from a regular city or town to a code city.

Cities and towns operate under different plans of government as follows:

- \* Mayor/council plan where an elected council is the policy-making governing body, and a mayor is elected as a separate official with executive and administrative authorities.

- \* Council/manager plan where an elected council is the policy-making governing body, including a chairperson who is also called the mayor but who does not possess administrative or executive authorities. A city or town manager is appointed by the council to act as the executive and administrator of the city or town.
- \* Commission plan where three persons are elected as the policy-making governing body but also possess executive and administrative authorities.

The process of initiating a change in classification or plan of government begins with a petition of city or town voters. Signature requirements vary. The only changes that may be initiated by resolution of the governing body are: changing classification to a code city, or a code city changing its plan of government. In most instances ballot propositions authorizing the change are submitted to voters for their approval or rejection.

**SUMMARY:**

The procedures for cities and towns to reorganize under different classifications, other than a first class city with a city charter, and to alter their plans of government, are altered to:

- \* Clarify the procedures by which these changes are made;
- \* Allow ballot propositions authorizing the changes to be submitted to voters by action of the governing body;
- \* Standardize the signature requirements for petitions proposing the change; and
- \* Retain the terms of office of the existing governing body members, except when a city alters its plan of government to the commission plan.

Any additional positions that are required are filled as if vacancies existed. Any reduction in positions occurs gradually, election-by-election, as the terms of office of existing members of the governing body end.

**Appropriation:** none

**Revenue:** none

**Fiscal Note:** none requested

**TESTIMONY FOR:**

This bill ameliorates the complexity, conflict and confusion surrounding reorganization of cities and towns and the change of form of government.

**TESTIMONY AGAINST:** None

**TESTIFIED:** Dave Williams, AWC (pro)