

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5329

**AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS,
FEBRUARY 17, 1993**

Brief Description: Changing provisions relating to port districts.

SPONSORS: Senators Haugen, A. Smith and Talmadge

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5329 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

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

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senator von Reichbauer.

Staff: Rod McAulay (786-7754)

Hearing Dates: February 5, 1993; February 17, 1993

BACKGROUND:

Port districts are governed by a board of three or five elected port commissioners. Port districts with a population of less than 500,000, are divided into three commissioner districts. In such port districts, each commissioner must reside in and be nominated from one of the commissioner districts, but all commissioners are elected at-large.

The voters of a port district may petition for an election to increase the commission from three to five commissioners. If a port district which is divided into three commissioner districts expands to five commissioners, the two additional commissioners are nominated and elected at-large and no new commissioner districts are created.

In less-than-county-wide port districts, there is no authority or procedure to eliminate commissioner districts.

When creating a less-than-county-wide port district with an assessed valuation of at least \$75 million in a county bordering on salt water, commissioner districts are not used in the initial election.

When creating a county-wide port district there is no provision for establishing the boundaries of commissioner districts prior to the election of the first commission.

When a port district attains a population of 500,000, the question of enlarging the commission from three to five members is automatically submitted to the voters.

SUMMARY:

Every county-wide port district shall be divided into three or five commissioner districts. In county-wide port districts with a population over 500,000, the commissioners are elected by the voters of their respective commissioner district.

A majority of the voters of a less-than-county-wide port district may abolish the division of the district into commissioner districts. The issue may be placed on the ballot by resolution of the commission or on the petition of 10 percent of the voters.

When creating a county-wide port district, the commissioner districts are described in the petition or resolution calling for the formation of the port district.

When creating a less-than-county-wide port district with an assessed valuation of at least \$75 million in a county bordering on salt water, the petition initiating the creation of the district may describe commissioner districts, in which event, the initial commissioners shall be elected by district.

A ballot measure to increase a port district commission from three to five members may be initiated by a resolution of the commission. When a port district increases from three to five members, the incumbent commissioners shall divide the district into five commissioner districts and the new members shall be elected to the two commissioner districts in which no current member resides.

A section of the port district laws which was both amended and repealed in the same bill enacted by the Legislature in 1992 is reenacted as amended.

EFFECT OF PROPOSED SUBSTITUTE:

The requirement that county-wide port districts with over 500,000 population elect their commissioners from districts is deleted. Ballot measures on questions to increase to five commissioners or to eliminate commissioner districts are permitted to be held at any special or general election date. The process is modified for assigning three commissioners to districts when the number of commissioners is increased to five. Redundant language is eliminated.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: none requested

TESTIMONY FOR (original bill):

This bill will enable Oak Harbor to proceed with the creation of a new port district with greater efficiency. It will also make the Port of Seattle more responsive to the concerns of citizens living around the SeaTac Airport. Small ports are given greater latitude in having three or five commissioners and allows them to nominate from commissioner districts or at-large.

TESTIMONY AGAINST (original bill):

We do not need to inject parochial interest into operation of major ports which have global concerns. The Port of Seattle is sensitive to and working with citizens living around the airport.

TESTIFIED: Linda Wright, Greater Oak Harbor Chamber of Commerce (pro); Elizabeth Sprinter, South King County Group-Portwatch (pro); Elizabeth Cairns-Warner, Westside Area Residents (pro); Minnie O. Brasher, Southwest King County Citizens (pro); Nancy Bratton, Seattle Chamber of Commerce (con); Gary Grant, President, Port of Seattle, Port Commission (con); Patrick Jones, Washington Public Ports Association