

SENATE BILL REPORT

SJR 8202

AS OF JANUARY 22, 1993

Brief Description: Allowing the review and modification of local government.

SPONSORS: Senator Haugen

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Staff: Eugene Green (786-7405)

Hearing Dates:

BACKGROUND:

The Local Governance Study Commission was established in 1985 to study local government in the state and make recommendations to the Legislature for changes in laws that were felt to be necessary. This commission had 21 members, and three ex-officio, nonvoting, members. The 21 members included four Senators, four Representatives, four city-elected officials, four county-elected officials, and five persons representing special districts. The ex-officio, nonvoting, members were the director of the Department of Community Development, who chaired the meetings, and the executive directors of the Association of Washington Cities and the Washington State Association of Counties.

The Constitution provides procedures by which: (1) a charter can be approved by the voters of a city of a certain minimum population to alter the governing body and officials of the city government, i.e., a first-class city charter; (2) a charter can be approved by the voters of any county to alter the governing body and officials of the county government, i.e., a regular county charter; and (3) a charter can be adopted to alter powers and governing bodies of any government or governments within the county, i.e., a combined "city-county" charter.

Statutes provide procedures on how most local governments can annex territory, how some local governments can have territory withdrawn or de-annexed, and how some of the same type of local governments can merge or consolidate.

The Interlocal Agreement Act authorizes local governments to enter into relationships as follows: two or more local governments that each have the authority to provide the same service or facility can enter into a contract by which one government provides the service or facility for the other local government or governments or the service or facility may be provided jointly.

The commission recommended the establishment of (1) a citizens' review process by which proposals to alter local governments can be developed, and (2) a process for local governments to enter into binding local government service agreements.

SUMMARY:

The Legislature is required to establish two separate processes by which citizens and their local government officials can consider alternatives to more adequately structure or shape local governments to meet their local needs as follows:

(1) A process must be established by which local government officials can enter into and implement local government service agreements for the provision of services and development of local policies and authorities, that could include the transfer of services and revenues between existing local governments. This process could be used on a county-wide, less than county-wide, or greater than county-wide basis (SB 5038).

(2) A process must be established by which a temporary group of citizens could be elected to review local governments within a county and possibly present proposals for altering local governments to the voters for their approval or rejection. An advisory group of local government elected officials would assist each of these temporary groups of local citizens in their deliberations. A proposal that is submitted to voters for their approval or rejection could relate to the formation, retention, boundaries, and powers of local governments. Provision must be made for the development and approval of proposals affecting an area greater than a single county and less than a single county (SB 5039).

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: none requested