

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Olympia Washington

BilAnalysis

BilNo. HB 1281

PublicUtilityDistrictCommissioners
Brieftitle

PublicArg: 2/4/97

Reps.Ogden/Cooper/Constantine
Sponsor

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BACKGROUND:

Public utility districts (PUD's) are municipal corporations authorized to generate and distribute electric energy, provide potable water, and provide sewer service.

PUD's are governed by an elected board of commissioners. Most PUD boards of commissioners are composed of three members who serve six-year staggered terms of office. Each PUD is divided into three commissioner districts each with approximately the same population, and the commissioner districts are used for residency purposes for any candidate for the commissioner position from that district and only voters residing in the district may vote at a primary to nominate candidates for the commissioner position from that district. However, voters throughout the entire PUD vote at the general election to elect each commissioner.

Voters of a PUD may authorize the board of commissioners to become a five-member board if the PUD has a population of 500,000 or more or if the PUD has a license from the Federal Power Commission to construct a hydroelectric project of an estimated cost of more than \$250 million. If the voters authorize the increase, the PUD is divided into two commissioner districts each with approximately the same population for the election of the two additional commissioners. This second set of commissioner districts is in addition to the normal set of three commissioner districts, which still is used to elect the other three commissioners. The additional two commissioners are elected to staggered four-year terms of office, but the other three commissioners are still elected to staggered six-year terms of office.

SUMMARY:

Voters of a PUD are authorized to reduce the terms of office of the three commissioners from six to four years.

Continued

The petition or resolution causing a ballot proposition to be submitted to voters authorizing the creation of a PUD must specify whether the commissioner will serve staggered four-year or six-year terms of office. Provisions are made to stagger the terms of office of the initial commissioner if a PUD is created at either six-year terms or four-year terms of office.

Voters of any PUD are authorized to increase the number of commissioner from three to five members. The use of the two districts used to elect the fourth and fifth commissioner is clarified to be for residency and nomination purposes only.

A single ballot proposition may include both proposals to increase the number of commissioner to five and to reduce the terms of office of the three commissioner from six to four years.

FISCAL NOTE: Not Requested.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill passed.