

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESB 6606

As Passed Senate, February 15, 2000

Title: An act relating to petitions for mergers of minor irrigation districts with other special purpose districts.

Brief Description: Clarifying the number of landowners needed on petitions to merge minor irrigation districts into other special purpose districts.

Sponsors: Senators Honeyford and Stevens.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: State & Local Government: 2/2/2000, 2/3/2000 [DP].
Passed Senate, 2/15/2000, 47-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE & LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Patterson, Chair; Gardner, Vice Chair; Hale, Haugen, Horn, Kline and McCaslin.

Staff: Diane Smith (786-7410)

Background: A smaller (minor) irrigation district may be merged into a larger (major) irrigation district if the assessed acreage in the minor district is no more than 30 percent of the combined assessed acreage of both.

There are two alternative procedures for instituting the merger. By one method, the board of directors of the minor district adopts a resolution requesting the major district to consider the merger. By the other method, the landowners in the minor district can petition the board of directors of the major district directly, requesting that the major district consider the merger.

Various choices of the minimum number or percent of landowners who must petition directly are given in the statute, depending on the circumstances.

Summary of Bill: When title to property in the district is held in any form of joint ownership, including that of husband and wife as owners of community property, all joint landowners are considered to be one landowner for purposes of determining the number of landowners needed to initiate the merger petition. Any one of the co-owners of jointly owned property may sign the petition requesting merger.

The petition must be considered by the county legislative authority.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: This bill clarifies a previous effort to improve effective and efficient management of resources. Everyone gets a vote once the petition is filed and the county commissioners put the merger to a vote.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Mike Schwisow, WA State Water Resources Assn. (pro).