

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESSB 5238

As Reported by House Committee On:
Local Government & Housing

Title: An act relating to the board of commissioners of a water-sewer district.

Brief Description: Modifying the board of commissioners of a water-sewer district.

Sponsors: By Senate Committee on Human Services & Corrections (originally sponsored by Senators Patterson, Johnson, McCaslin, Haugen and Fairley).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Local Government & Housing: 3/22/01, 3/29/01 [DP].

Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill

- Authorizes water-sewer districts with over 25,000 customers to increase the board up to seven-members. (Includes a petition process to call for a vote of the customers).
- Creates a process to decrease the board to either five or three-members.
- Repeals the statute authorizing the formation of associations of water-sewer commissioners

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT & HOUSING

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Dunshee, Democratic Co-Chair; Mulliken, Republican Co-Chair; Edwards, Democratic Vice Chair; Mielke, Republican Vice Chair; Berkey, Crouse, DeBolt, Dunn, Edmonds, Hatfield, Jarrett and Kirby.

Staff: Scott MacColl (786-7106).

Background:

Water-sewer districts are governed by three-member boards of commissioners. A three-member commission may put the question to an election to increase to five

commissioners by either passing a resolution or receiving a signed petition of 10 percent of the registered voters in the district.

However the commissioners of a water-sewer district with over 10,000 customers may determine by resolution to increase its size to five members. This decision is subject to a vote in a special election if a signed petition of 10 percent of the registered voters in the district is submitted within ninety days of adoption.

Water-sewer commissioners are authorized to form an association of commissioners of two or more districts to improve the operation and organization of the districts.

Summary of Bill:

In water-sewer districts of 25,000 customers or more, a five-member board of commissioners may by resolution choose to increase the number of commissioners from five to seven without an election. This decision is subject to a vote in a special election if a signed petition of ten percent of the registered voters in the district that voted in the last municipal election is submitted within 90 days of adoption.

A seven-member or five-member board may decrease a board from seven to five-members, or from five to three-members by resolution of the board, or through an election caused by a petition signed by 10 percent of the registered voters in the district.

Authority to create associations of water-sewer district commissioners is repealed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

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

Testimony For: This bill allows the largest sewer and water districts at their option to increase to seven board members. There are currently seven districts eligible to use this option. This bill is needed because the districts of Soos Creek and Cedar River want to merge, but they want to ensure that all residents are represented on the board. The association of water-sewer commissioners authority is no longer necessary or valid, and therefore should be removed from the statute as the associations are private. The senate amended the bill to have a referendum measure to decrease the number of commissioners if the customers felt it necessary.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: (In support) Joe Daniels, Washington Association of Water-Sewer Districts.