
HOUSE BILL 1920

State of Washington 58th Legislature 2003 Regular Session

By Representatives Dickerson, Nixon, Schual-Berke, Murray, Romero, Upthegrove and Chase

Read first time 02/17/2003. Referred to Committee on Local Government.

1 AN ACT Relating to voting for port commissioners; amending RCW
2 53.12.010 and 53.12.021; and adding a new section to chapter 53.12 RCW.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 **Sec. 1.** RCW 53.12.010 and 2002 c 51 s 1 are each amended to read
5 as follows:

6 (1) The powers of the port district shall be exercised through a
7 port commission consisting of three or, when permitted or required by
8 this title, five members. Every port district that is not coextensive
9 with a county having a population of five hundred thousand or more and
10 less than one million shall be divided into the same number of
11 commissioner districts as there are commissioner positions, each having
12 approximately equal population, unless provided otherwise under
13 subsection (2) of this section. Every port district with a population
14 of one million or more shall have five commissioners and shall be
15 divided into five commissioner districts, each having approximately
16 equal population. Where a port district with three commissioner
17 positions is coextensive with the boundaries of a county that has a
18 population of less than five hundred thousand and the county has three
19 county legislative authority districts, the port commissioner districts

1 shall be the county legislative authority districts. In other
2 instances where a port district is divided into commissioner districts,
3 the port commission shall divide the port district into commissioner
4 districts unless the commissioner districts have been described
5 pursuant to RCW 53.04.031. The commissioner districts shall be altered
6 as provided in chapter 53.16 RCW.

7 Commissioner districts shall be used as follows: (a) Only a
8 registered voter who resides in a commissioner district may be a
9 candidate for, or hold office as, a commissioner of the commissioner
10 district; and (b) only the voters of a commissioner district may vote
11 at a primary to nominate candidates for a commissioner of the
12 commissioner district. Voters of the entire port district may vote at
13 a general election to elect a person as a commissioner of the
14 commissioner district, except in a port district with a population of
15 one million or more, where only the voters of a commissioner district
16 may vote at a general election to elect a person as a commissioner of
17 the commissioner district.

18 (2)(a) In port districts having a population of less than one
19 million with five commissioners, two of the commissioner districts may
20 include the entire port district if approved by the voters of the
21 district either at the time of formation or at a subsequent port
22 district election at which the issue is proposed pursuant to a
23 resolution adopted by the board of commissioners and delivered to the
24 county auditor.

25 (b) In a port district with five commissioners, where two of the
26 commissioner districts include the entire port district, the port
27 district may be divided into five commissioner districts if proposed
28 pursuant to a resolution adopted by the board of commissioners or
29 pursuant to a petition by the voters and approved by the voters of the
30 district at the next general or special election occurring sixty or
31 more days after the adoption of the resolution. A petition proposing
32 such an increase must be submitted to the county auditor of the county
33 in which the port district is located and signed by voters of the port
34 district at least equal in number to ten percent of the number of
35 voters in the port district who voted at the last general election.

36 Upon approval by the voters, the commissioner district boundaries
37 shall be redrawn into five districts within one hundred twenty days and
38 submitted to the county auditor pursuant to RCW 53.16.015. The new

1 commissioner districts shall be numbered one through five and the three
2 incumbent commissioners representing the three former districts shall
3 represent commissioner districts one through three. The two at large
4 incumbent commissioners shall represent commissioner districts four and
5 five. If, as a result of redrawing the district boundaries more than
6 one of the incumbent commissioners resides in one of the new
7 commissioner districts, the commissioners who reside in the same
8 commissioner district shall determine by lot which of the numbered
9 commissioner districts they shall represent for the remainder of their
10 respective terms.

11 **Sec. 2.** RCW 53.12.021 and 1994 c 223 s 82 are each amended to read
12 as follows:

13 Any less than county-wide port district having a population of less
14 than one million that uses commissioner districts may cease using
15 commissioner districts as provided in this section.

16 A ballot proposition authorizing the elimination of commissioner
17 districts shall be submitted to the voters of a less than county-wide
18 port district having a population of less than one million that is
19 divided into commissioner districts if (1) a petition is submitted to
20 the port commission proposing that the port district cease using
21 commissioner districts, that is signed by registered voters of the port
22 district equal in number to at least ten percent of the number of
23 voters who voted at the last district general election; or (2) the port
24 commissioners adopt a resolution proposing that the port district cease
25 using commissioner districts. The port commission shall transfer the
26 petition or resolution immediately to the county auditor who shall,
27 when a petition is submitted, review the signatures and certify its
28 sufficiency. A ballot proposition authorizing the elimination of
29 commissioner districts shall be submitted at the next district general
30 election occurring sixty or more days after a petition with sufficient
31 signatures was submitted. If the ballot proposition authorizing the
32 port district to cease using commissioner districts is approved by a
33 simple majority vote, the port district shall cease using commissioner
34 districts at all subsequent elections.

35 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 53.12 RCW
36 to read as follows:

1 (1) Port commissioners of port districts with populations of one
2 million or more who are holding office as of the effective date of this
3 act shall retain their positions for the remainder of their terms until
4 their successors are elected and qualified, and assume office in
5 accordance with RCW 29.04.170.

6 (2) The port commissioners shall divide the port district into five
7 commissioner districts prior to the first day of June in the year in
8 which the next regular election for commissioner shall be held. The
9 new commissioner districts shall be numbered one through five and shall
10 be represented by the incumbent commissioners. If, as a result of
11 drawing the district boundaries more than one of the incumbent
12 commissioners reside in one of the new commissioner districts, the
13 commissioners who reside in the same commissioner district shall
14 determine by lot which of the commissioner districts they shall
15 represent for the remainder of their respective terms.

16 (3) If additional commissioners must be elected to increase the
17 number of commissioners to five, the procedures of RCW 53.12.130 shall
18 be followed.

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