

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5791

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As of February 22, 2005

**Title:** An act relating to economic development powers of counties and port districts.

**Brief Description:** Modifying economic development powers of counties and port districts.

**Sponsors:** Senators Honeyford, Benton, Deccio, Mulliken, Benson and McCaslin.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Government Operations & Elections: 2/21/05.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ELECTIONS

**Staff:** Mac Nicholson (786-7445)

**Background:** Engaging in economic development programs is statutorily deemed a public purpose for all counties. Counties may contract with nonprofit corporations in furtherance of economic development programs.

The interlocal cooperation act allows local governments to enter into agreements with other local governments to jointly exercise all the powers, privileges, and authority conferred upon the local government.

**Summary of Bill:** In order to carry out economic development programs, any county with a population of fewer than 30,000 persons that borders the Columbia river (Pacific, Wahkiakum, Skamania, and Klickitat counties) may transfer or loan, with or without consideration, funds, real or personal property, property interests, or services to any port district.

Any county with fewer than 30,000 persons that borders the Columbia river may, through an interlocal agreement with a port district, exercise with that port district any powers of the port district with respect to economic development programs or projects.

If any provision of the act is held invalid, the remainder of the act is not affected.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

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

**Testimony For:** Klickitat county receives tipping fees from a landfill operation and reinvests those funds in economic development projects in the community. The bill is narrowly drafted and arose because the county auditor refused to sign off on paperwork to distribute funds from the county to the port district for a project, which delayed the project. The bill makes sure

that such delays won't happen on future projects. Ports are concerned about the interlocal agreement that could make a county into a port district. Ports have the unique ability to engage in industrial development and are concerned about any erosion of this narrow authority that has not been given to other governments.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Who Testified:** PRO: Senator Honeyford, prime sponsor; Pat Jones, WA Public Ports Association.