Local Government Committee

HB 2637

Brief Description: Concerning annexations by code cities in counties with four hundred thousand or more residents.

Sponsors: Representatives Stonier, Vick and Harris.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Establishes voter approval requirements for certain annexation methods that may be employed by code cities in counties that have 400,000 or more residents and are bordered by the Columbia River.

Hearing Date: 1/30/14

Staff: Ethan Moreno (786-7386).

Background:

Municipal Annexations - General Information.
Current law authorizes multiple methods for municipal annexations. While cities that operate under the Optional Municipal Code (code cities) have statutory requirements for governance and operation that are separate from those that do not, the annexation methods that all cities and towns may employ are generally similar.

Annexations of Unincorporated "Islands" of Territory.
Among other permitted annexation methods, code cities are authorized to conduct certain annexations through a resolution of the jurisdiction's legislative body. Neither voter nor property owner approvals are necessary for these annexations. An example of this resolution-based authority is the 'island annexation method', a method that allows cities and towns planning under the Growth Management Act (GMA), following the satisfaction of public notice and other procedural requirements, to annex qualifying unincorporated "islands" of territory that meet contiguity and other requirements. Annexations conducted through this island annexation method are subject to referendum.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

<u>Annexations of Territory Served by Fire Protection Districts - Interlocal Agreement Process</u>.
Code cities may also annex territory served by one or more fire protection districts (fire district or districts) through an ordinance-based interlocal agreement process. Annexations occurring under this process begin with the adoption of an interlocal agreement (a joint or cooperative action agreement between two or more public agencies) between the annexing city and the applicable county and fire districts. The interlocal agreement must meet several requirements, including describing the boundaries of the territory proposed for annexation. Annexations conducted through this method are generally subject to referendum.

<u>Annexations of Territory within an Urban Growth Area - Interlocal Agreement Process</u>.
Large cities in the six counties that are subject to specific land use review and evaluation requirements established in the GMA may annex certain territory by ordinance if certain requirements, including the negotiation of interlocal agreements between the participating the applicable city and county, are satisfied. Annexations conducted through this method are subject to referendum.

Summary of Bill:

Voter approval requirements are established for certain annexation methods that may be employed by code cities in counties that have 400,000 or more residents and are bordered by the Columbia River. If the annexation is conducted through the island annexation method or through either of the two interlocal agreement-based methods available to code cities, the question of annexation must, if the annexation area has at least 100 voters, be submitted to the voters of the annexation area. Specific notification requirements for the election are established, and the election must be conducted according to general election laws. If a majority of votes cast in the election are in favor of the annexation, the annexation is deemed approved. If the annexation area has less than 100 voters, the annexation is deemed approved if a majority of the voters in the subject area give their written consent to the annexation.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.