

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 5411

As Passed House:
April 16, 2013

Title: An act relating to requiring the ballot proposition to reduce the terms of office of port commissioners to be submitted at the next general election.

Brief Description: Requiring the ballot proposition to reduce the terms of office of port commissioners to be submitted at the next general election.

Sponsors: Senators Rolfes, Holmquist Newbry, Hatfield, Honeyford and Conway.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Government Operations & Elections: 3/26/13, 3/28/13 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 4/16/13, 96-0.

<p>Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Requires ballot propositions to reduce the terms of office of port commissioners to be submitted for a vote at the general election.
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HOUSE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ELECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Hunt, Chair; Bergquist, Vice Chair; Buys, Ranking Minority Member; Taylor, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Alexander, Carlyle, Kristiansen, Manweller, Orwall and Van De Wege.

Staff: Marsha Reilly (786-7135).

Background:

A port district is governed by a three-member board of commissioners elected to staggered six- or four-year terms of office, with one commissioner being elected in each odd-year general election. Voters of a port district with a population of 500,000 or more may authorize the size of the board of commissioners to be increased to five members. The ports of Seattle

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and Tacoma are the only ports with a population of 500,000 or more, and both have a five-member board of commissioners.

The terms of office for port commissioners of each countywide port district with a population of 100,000 or more is four years, and either six or four years in all other port districts. The six-year term of office may be changed to a four-year term upon either a resolution of the port commissioners or petition by the voters of the port district. The signatures required for a petition must be at least 10 percent of the number of voters in the port district voting at the last general election. The ballot proposition must be submitted to the voters for approval at the next general or special election that occurs 60 or more days after the adoption of the resolution or submission of the petition.

Summary of Bill:

Ballot propositions to reduce the term of office of port commissioners may no longer be submitted for a vote at a special election.

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.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This bill came about because of a petition to change the terms of office from six to four years for a port in Kitsap County. The petition was submitted in January and the issue was placed on the ballot at the special election in April. Because there were no other issues on the ballot, that port had to pay for the entire election. Moving these elections to the general election will save money.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Ginger Eagle, Washington Public Ports Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.