

SENATE BILL REPORT

EHB 1013

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Governmental Operations, February 27, 2014

Title: An act relating to authorizing regular meetings of county legislative authorities to be held at alternate locations within the county.

Brief Description: Authorizing regular meetings of county legislative authorities to be held at alternate locations within the county.

Sponsors: Representatives Appleton, Seaquist, Ryu and Hansen.

Brief History: Passed House: 3/09/13, 62-36; 2/17/14, 65-32.

Committee Activity: Governmental Operations: 4/01/13, 2/27/14 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Roach, Chair; Benton, Vice Chair; Hasegawa, Ranking Member; Conway, Dandel, McCoy and Rivers.

Staff: Sam Thompson (786-7413)

Background: County legislative authorities, including county councils and boards of county commissioners, hold regular meetings at county seats to transact business required or permitted by law, such as adopting ordinances. County legislative authorities may hold special meetings at other locations in the county. However, county legislative authorities may not transact certain business at those special meetings, such as adopting ordinances. Those actions can only be transacted in regular meetings held at county seats.

Summary of Bill: As an option exercised on an infrequent and irregular basis, a county legislative authority may hold regular meetings at a location outside of the county seat but within the county if the county legislative authority determines that meeting at an alternate location would support greater citizen engagement in local government.

The county legislative authority must give notice of any regular meeting held outside of the county seat. Notice must be given at least 20 days before the meeting specified in the notice. At a minimum, notice must be posted on the county's website, published in a newspaper of

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general circulation in the county, and sent via email to any county resident who has chosen to receive notice at an email address of a regular meeting held outside of the county seat.

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.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

Testimony From 2013 Regular Session.

PRO: This bill is about access and transparency of county government. Some counties do not have cable throughout the county where people can watch the county government meetings. This bill would provide county commissioners the opportunity to move the meeting and have regular business at that meeting. People could see the process, see the vote, and become part of the whole process. This bill is valuable to counties across the state, especially the very large counties and the geographically diverse counties. The House amended this bill to address some of the concern around the bill, including notice provisions and how this process could be used by the county legislative authority. This bill provides local county authorities with some flexibility to allow them to get out and be closer to the citizens that elected them. Citizens should have the opportunity to see their county legislative authority in action. This bill provides a county legislative authority with the ability to be open, accessible, and transparent.

Testimony From 2014 Regular Session.

This bill will facilitate more face-to-face engagement by county legislative authorities with citizens in locales outside of the county seat. In some counties, citizens must travel long distances to attend meetings at the county seat. The bill has been amended to incorporate additional notice requirements.

Persons Testifying:

Persons Testifying From 2013 Regular Session.

PRO: Representative Appleton, prime sponsor; Brian Enslow, WA State Assn. of Counties; Tom McBride, Rob Gelder, Kitsap County.

Persons Testifying From 2014 Regular Session.

PRO: Robert Gelder, Kitsap County Commissioner; Tom McBride, Kitsap County.