

FINAL BILL REPORT

SHB 1145

C 74 L 15
Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Allowing joint meetings of county legislative authorities under certain circumstances.

Sponsors: House Committee on Local Government (originally sponsored by Representatives Haler and Fey).

House Committee on Local Government
Senate Committee on Government Operations & Security

Background:

Counties - Regular and Special Meetings of Legislative Authorities.

Washington counties provide regional services to all residents within their jurisdiction, including administering elections and furnishing judicial services, and a broader array of services to residents in unincorporated areas.

County legislative authorities must hold regular meetings at the county seat to transact any business required or permitted by law. Although the term "regular meeting" is not defined in statutory provisions governing counties, the Municipal Research and Services Center defines "regular meeting" as one that is held according to a schedule adopted by the applicable public governing body.

The location requirements for special meetings are less restrictive and authorize county legislative authorities to hold special meetings (meetings that are not held according to an adopted schedule) to transact the business of the county at any location within the county if the agenda item or items are of unique interest or concern to the citizens in the area of the county in which the special meeting is to be held.

Special meetings have specific notice and transaction requirements. The notices of special meetings must be: delivered at least 24 hours before the meeting to requesting newspapers and radio and television stations; posted on the agency's website; and prominently displayed at the main entrance of the entity's principal location and, if applicable, the meeting site. The notices must specify the time and place of the special meeting and the business to be transacted. Final disposition actions may not be taken on any matter that is not specified in the notice.

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.

Neither regular nor special meeting provisions for counties include permissions, requirements, or other governing conditions related to joint meetings of county legislative authorities in a single location.

Attorney General Opinion.

On November 14, 2014, the Attorney General of Washington issued an opinion stating that the legislative authority of one county may not meet within another county's borders, to discuss joint, bi-county projects. The opinion also stated that the Legislature could authorize these joint meetings, but that it has not yet done so.

Summary:

Any two or more county legislative authorities may hold a joint regular or special meeting in a participating county if the agenda item or items relate to actions or considerations of mutual interest or concern to the participating legislative authorities. A joint regular meeting may only be held at the county seat of a participating county. A legislative authority participating in a joint regular meeting must, for purposes of the meeting, comply with notice requirements for special meetings. This special meeting notice requirement does not apply to the legislative authority of the county in which the joint regular meeting will be held.

If the joint legislative authority meeting is a special meeting, the meeting may be held at the county seat or other agreed upon location within the jurisdiction of a participating county.

In the event of a joint regular meeting, each participating county retains its authority to transact any business required or permitted by law. In the event of a joint special meeting, each county retains its authority to transact business of the county.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	98	0
Senate	49	0

Effective: July 24, 2015