
HOUSE BILL 1266

State of Washington

64th Legislature

2015 Regular Session

By Representatives Buys and Haler

Read first time 01/16/15. Referred to Committee on State Government.

1 AN ACT Relating to creating a task force on elections for
2 irrigation districts; creating new sections; and providing an
3 expiration date.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that irrigation
6 districts were statutorily authorized in the 1800s and that the
7 statutes governing these special purpose districts are in need of
8 modernization, starting with the elections process. The legislature
9 intends to form a task force to review chapter 87.03 RCW, various
10 election processes and technology, and make recommendations for
11 statutory changes that would provide an improved, transparent, and
12 accountable voting process for irrigation districts. The legislature
13 intends to involve members that serve on committees that have
14 jurisdiction over special purpose district elections and
15 water-related agricultural issues and interested stakeholders.

16 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1)(a) A task force on irrigation
17 district elections is established, with members as provided in this
18 subsection.

19 (b)(i) Two members from each of the two largest caucuses of the
20 senate as appointed by the president of the senate and two members

1 from each of the two largest caucuses of the house of representatives
2 as appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives;

3 (ii) The secretary of state, or the secretary of state's
4 designee;

5 (iii) A representative of the Washington association of county
6 auditors;

7 (iv) A representative of the Washington state water resources
8 association;

9 (v) A representative of the Whatcom county agricultural district
10 coalition;

11 (vi) A representative of an irrigation district located east of
12 the crest of the Cascade mountains;

13 (vii) A representative of an irrigation district located west of
14 the crest of the Cascade mountains;

15 (viii) A representative of the Washington state farm bureau;

16 (ix) A representative of the Washington state grange; and

17 (x) A representative of the federally recognized Indian tribes in
18 Washington, if they choose to participate.

19 (2) The prime sponsor of this act shall convene the initial
20 meeting of the task force by August 1, 2015, and shall serve as
21 cochair. The senate cochair shall be appointed by the majority leader
22 of the senate. If the cochair from the house of representatives
23 chooses not to serve as cochair, another cochair may be appointed by
24 the minority leader of the house of representatives. The cochairs
25 shall invite and approve individuals to serve as nonlegislative
26 representatives on the task force.

27 (3) The task force shall review and take testimony on the
28 following issues:

29 (a) The election process as established in chapter 87.03 RCW and
30 how it is implemented in the irrigation districts throughout the
31 state;

32 (b) The election processes provided by the county auditors;

33 (c) Election processes using modern technology or from other
34 special purpose districts; and

35 (d) Any other issues that arise from the irrigation district
36 election process that may need modernization or improvement.

37 (4) The task force shall identify potential changes to improve
38 efficiency, accuracy, integrity, and transparency of the irrigation
39 district election process and provide a report to the appropriate
40 committees of the legislature by November 15, 2015. The report must

1 identify which recommendations are supported by all of the members of
2 the task force.

3 (5) Staff support for the task force must be provided by senate
4 committee services and the house of representatives office of program
5 research. The task force may contract with additional persons who
6 have specific technical expertise if such expertise is necessary to
7 carry out the duties of the task force.

8 (6) Legislative members of the task force shall be reimbursed for
9 travel expenses in accordance with RCW 44.04.120. Nonlegislative
10 members, except those representing an employer or organization, are
11 entitled to be reimbursed for travel expenses in accordance with RCW
12 43.03.050 and 43.03.060.

13 (7) The expenses of the task force must be paid jointly by the
14 senate and the house of representatives.

15 (8) This section expires July 1, 2016.

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