

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1049

As Amended by the Senate

Title: An act relating to updating timelines for adopting county commissioner district boundaries following expansion from three to five commissioners.

Brief Description: Updating timelines for adopting county commissioner district boundaries following expansion from three to five commissioners.

Sponsors: Representatives Doglio, Bateman, Riccelli and Ormsby; by request of Secretary of State.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Local Government: 1/11/23, 1/13/23 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/1/23, 97-0.

Senate Amended.

Passed Senate: 3/22/23, 49-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Updates the timeline for a board of county commissioners that expands from three to five members to adopt a resolution creating new commissioner districts.
- Updates the timeline for the county prosecuting attorney to petition the court to appoint a referee to designate the new commissioner districts for a board of county commissioners that fails to adopt a resolution creating new commissioner districts.
- Updates the date by which a court-appointed referee must designate the five new districts in the event that a board of commissioners fails to do so.

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

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Duerr, Chair; Alvarado, Vice Chair; Goehner, Ranking Minority Member; Jacobsen, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Berg, Griffey and Riccelli.

Staff: Elizabeth Allison (786-7129).

Background:

A board of county commissioners that expands from three to five members must adopt a resolution creating five new districts by the second Monday of March of the year following the election. If a board of county commissioners does not adopt the resolution by the second Tuesday of March of the year following the election, the county prosecuting attorney must petition the county superior court to appoint a referee to designate the five new districts. The referee must designate the districts no later than June 1 of the year following the election.

The regular filing period for declarations of candidacy for offices in the state general election begins the Monday two weeks before Memorial Day and ends the following Friday in the year in which the office is scheduled to be voted upon.

Summary of Bill:

The timeline for which a board of county commissioners that expands from three to five commissioners has to adopt a resolution creating five new districts is updated to the ninetieth day prior to the first day of filing week of the year following the election. If a board of county commissioners that expands from three to five commissioners fails to create the five new districts by the eighty-ninth day prior to the first day of filing week, the county prosecuting attorney must petition the county superior court for a referee to designate the districts. The referee must designate the districts by the sixtieth day prior to the first day of filing week.

EFFECT OF SENATE AMENDMENT(S):

The Senate amendment replaces “filing week” with “filing period described in RCW 29A.24.050” for purposes of timelines established in the bill.

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) Thurston County is moving to five members on its board of county commissioners and its port commission. County commissioners need a little more time to create the new district boundaries. This bill allows that process to go more smoothly and makes sure the right information gets to the voters. Redistricting cleanup in the statutes has been done over the past 13 years. Filing week was adjusted and it was believed that all other timelines were updated, but when Thurston County went from three to five commissioners, it was discovered that the timeline for adopting county commissioner district boundaries had not been changed. The port and county have different timelines and this bill brings those districts into alignment.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Beth Doglio, prime sponsor; Mary Hall, Thurston County Auditor's Office; Brian Hatfield, Office of the Secretary of State; and Carolina Mejia, Thurston County.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.