

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SHB 1620

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As Reported by Senate Committee On:  
Local Government, Land Use & Tribal Affairs, March 16, 2023

**Title:** An act relating to the number of inhabitants required for incorporation as a city or town.

**Brief Description:** Concerning the number of inhabitants required for incorporation as a city or town.

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

**Brief History:** Passed House: 2/9/23, 97-0.

**Committee Activity:** Local Government, Land Use & Tribal Affairs: 3/09/23, 3/16/23 [DP].

### Brief Summary of Bill

- Suspends, temporarily, the requirement that an area must have at least 3000 inhabitants to incorporate if it is within five air-miles of a city with a population of 15,000.

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## SENATE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT, LAND USE & TRIBAL AFFAIRS

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Lovelett, Chair; Salomon, Vice Chair; Torres, Ranking Member; Kauffman and Short.

**Staff:** Maggie Douglas (786-7279)

**Background:** Under state law, an area may incorporate as a city if it has a minimum of 1500 inhabitants. If the area is located within five miles of the boundaries of a city with a population of 15,000 or more, the area must have a minimum of 3000 inhabitants prior to

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incorporating.

A registered voter in the area proposed for incorporation may initiate incorporation proceedings by filing a notice with the county containing information about the proposed city or town and paying the \$100 filing fee.

The county boundary review board, or the county legislative authority if there is no boundary review board in the county, must hold a public meeting on the proposed incorporation following the filing of a notice. Within 180 days of the meeting, at least 10 percent of the population of the area must sign a petition for incorporation and the petition must be filed with the county auditor.

If these steps are satisfied, an election will be held to determine whether the area will incorporate. A voter must be qualified to vote in the county and must have resided within the area proposed for incorporation for at least 30 days to be eligible to vote in the election. If a majority of voters vote in favor of incorporation, the new city or town is incorporated.

**Summary of Bill:** The requirement that an area within five air-miles of a city of 15,000 or more must have at least 3000 inhabitants to incorporate is temporarily suspended until June 30, 2028.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members:** No.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: Browns Point and Dash Point are isolated communities but still within five air miles of a major city. They are unsatisfied by several municipal and county services. Particularly, these communities are concerned about their police services because police currently come from Puyallup and take at least 40 minutes to arrive provided there is no exceptional traffic. There is not bus service in Dash Point for those who do not drive. Homelessness, public transportation, sewer conditions, and land use are all issues with little transparency of how dollars are being spent to help the community. This bill provides self-determination, supports growing communities with self-governance, and allows an option for isolated communities to better meet their needs.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Representative Jake Fey, Prime Sponsor; Jim West; Marty Campbell; Leslie McQuistin; Stirling Smith; Leo Emerson, Dash Point Social and Improvement Club.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** No one.