

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## SSB 5437

---

---

C 369 L 23  
Synopsis as Enacted

**Brief Description:** Concerning vacancies of the governing body of special purpose districts.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Local Government, Land Use & Tribal Affairs (originally sponsored by Senators MacEwen and Hunt).

**Senate Committee on Local Government, Land Use & Tribal Affairs**  
**House Committee on Local Government**

**Background:** When a vacancy on an elected nonpartisan governing body of a special purpose district where property ownership is not a qualification to vote, or a town or a city other than a first-class city or a charter code city occurs, the remaining members of the governing body appoint someone to fill the vacancy.

If the appointment is not made within 90 days of the vacancy, the authority to make the appointment reverts to the county legislative authority of the county in which all or the largest geographic portion of the local government is located. If the county legislative authority fails to make the appointment within 180 days of the vacancy, the county or remaining members of the local governmental governing body may request the Governor to make the appointment.

When less than two members of the governing body remain in office, the county legislative authority of the county in which all or the largest geographic portion of the government is located appoints either one or two persons to bring the governing body up to two persons.

Special purpose districts that use this process to fill vacancies include:

- Airport District Commissioners;
- Metropolitan Park District Commissioners;
- Park and Recreation District Commissioners;
- Fire Protection District Commissioners;
- Port District Commissioners;
- Public Utility District Commissioners;

---

*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.*

- Water-Sewer District Commissioners;
- Cemetery District Commissioners;
- Public Hospital District Commissioners; and
- Flood Control Zone District Supervisors.

**Summary:** After a vacancy occurs on a special purpose where property ownership is not a qualification to vote or that is not a qualifying special purpose district, the remaining members of the governing body must nominate at least one candidate at a meeting of the governing body.

The governing body must post notice of the vacancy and the name of the nominated candidate or candidates in three public places in the special purpose district, including on the district's website if the district has a website, for a minimum of 15 days. During the notice period, registered voters who reside in the special purpose district may submit nominations to the remaining members of the governing body.

After the notice period, the remaining members of the governing body must appoint a qualified person or persons from the nominations to the governing body at a meeting of the governing body.

A qualifying special purpose district includes fire protection districts and fire protection service authorities with assessed value under \$5 billion.

**Votes on Final Passage:**

Senate	49	0	
House	98	0	(House amended)
Senate	48	0	(Senate concurred)

**Effective:** July 23, 2023