
Higher Education Committee

HB 1901

Brief Description: Establishing additional health sciences and services authorities in certain areas.

Sponsors: Representatives Johnson, Warnick, Chandler, Ross, Cody, Newhouse, Wood, Moeller, Pedersen, Appleton, Ericksen, Cox, Finn, Lias, Quall, Dammeier, Haler, Hunt, Angel, Schmick, Armstrong, Jacks, Maxwell, Probst, Morrell and Hinkle.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Authorizes the creation of a second Health Sciences and Services Authority (Authority).
- Limits the location of an Authority to counties with a population of less than one million persons lying east of the crest of the Cascade Mountains.
- Expands the purpose of an Authority to include the advancement of new programs to combat disease and promote public health.

Hearing Date: 2/18/09

Staff: Cece Clynych (786-7195)

Background:

Health Sciences and Services Authority. Legislation passed in 2007 authorized the creation of a Health Sciences and Services Authority (Authority) to promote bioscience-based economic development and advance new therapies and procedures to combat disease and promote public health. The creation of just a single Authority was authorized, and only in a county with a population of less than one million persons.

An individual local government, or local governments joining together, may establish such an Authority by ordinance or resolution. The ordinance or resolution must specify the powers of the Authority, establish an administrative board, clarify the geographic boundaries of the Authority and provide investment guidelines.

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.

An Authority is overseen by a board of not more than 14 members and has all the general powers necessary to carry out its purposes and duties, such as the power to make and execute agreements and contracts, establish special funds, hire staff, leverage the Authority's public funds with moneys received from other public and private sources, hold funds received by the Authority in trust, and make grants to entities to promote bioscience-based economic development.

Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB). The HECB was authorized to approve or reject applications submitted by local governments for an area's designation as an Authority. The HECB was also charged with adopting any rules necessary to implement the Authority program as well as responsibility for developing evaluation and performance measures in order to evaluate the effectiveness of an Authority's activities. The Board is required to report to the Legislature on a biennial basis, beginning December 1, 2009.

In November of 2007, the HECB released a Request for Applications for designation of an Authority. Although several local jurisdictions inquired, only Spokane County submitted an application. By resolution, the HECB approved the designation of an Authority in Spokane County.

Summary of Bill:

The creation of a second area Authority is authorized. Authorities may only be created in a county with a population of less than one million persons that is located east of the crest of the Cascade Mountains. The purpose of the program is expanded to also include the advancement of new programs, as well as new therapies and procedures, to combat disease and promote public health.

Applications from interested local governments are due by December 31, 2009 and must be processed by the HECB within 60 days of submission.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 9, 2009.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.