

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 6428

As Reported By House Committee On:
Government Operations

Title: An act relating to the merger of special districts.

Brief Description: Revising irrigation district mergers.

Sponsors: Senators Newhouse and Haugen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Government Operations: 2/21/96, 2/23/96 [DPA].

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 15 members: Representatives Reams, Chairman; Cairnes, Vice Chairman; Goldsmith, Vice Chairman; Rust, Ranking Minority Member; Scott, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Conway; R. Fisher; Hargrove; Honeyford; Hymes; Mulliken; Scheurman; D. Schmidt; Van Luven and Wolfe.

Staff: Steve Lundin (786-7127).

Background:

1. Boundary review boards

Legislation was enacted in 1967 creating a boundary review board in every county with a population of 210,000 or more and authorizing the creation of a boundary review board in any other county.

Boundary review boards are authorized to review and approve, reject, or modify and approve proposed boundary changes for cities, towns, and a few special districts. The boundary changes include the creation, dissolution, addition of territory to, removal of territory from, and consolidation or merging of such local governments. Boundary changes for a number of special districts are subject to potential review by a boundary review board, including drainage districts and drainage improvement districts.

2. Special districts with franchise limited to property owners

A wide variety of special districts are authorized to be created that provide diking, drainage, or flood control improvements. The franchise in these special districts is limited to property owners. Irrigation districts are authorized to provide irrigation and other services and improvements. The franchise in irrigation districts is limited to property owners.

A procedure exists by which a "drainage improvement district, joint drainage improvement district, or consolidated drainage improvement district" may merge into an irrigation district. This procedure is initiated by action of the board of supervisors of the drainage improvement district, joint drainage improvement district, or consolidated drainage improvement district. It does not appear that this procedure is available for a diking and drainage improvement district to merge into an irrigation district.

Summary of Amended Bill: The procedure for a drainage improvement district, joint drainage improvement district, or consolidated drainage improvement district to merge into an irrigation district may be initiated by petition of ten owners of land within the district.

The merger of a drainage improvement district, joint drainage improvement district, or consolidated drainage improvement district into an irrigation district is not subject to potential review by a boundary review board.

Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill: The correct improvement districts are referenced in the waiver from boundary review board review.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: This will assist in merging some small drainage improvement districts into a larger irrigation district.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Mike Schwisow, Washington State Water Resources Association.