

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5485

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Government Operations, January 31, 1996

**Title:** An act relating to community councils in unincorporated areas.

**Brief Description:** Authorizing community councils in unincorporated areas of counties.

**Sponsors:** Senators Rasmussen and Winsley.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Government Operations: 1/22/96, 1/31/96 [DP].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Haugen, Chair; Sheldon, Vice Chair; Goings, Hale, Heavey and McCaslin.

**Staff:** Katie Healy (786-7403)

**Background:** A community council must have at least 1,000 people residing within an unincorporated community. It is created by the filing of a petition, signed by at least 10 percent of those who voted in the last state general election. If the petition is valid, the county legislative authority must call a special election to determine whether a community council shall be created and to elect from five to 11 initial council members. Council members' terms are for four years and elections are nonpartisan.

If created, the county legislative authority must adopt an ordinance establishing policies and conditions and designate portions of the county comprehensive plan and zoning ordinances that serve as an overall guide and framework for the development of proposed community comprehensive plans and proposed community zoning ordinances. Proposed community comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances adopted by a community council must be submitted to the county legislative authority for review of consistency with the county ordinance. Approved community comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances are enforced by the county as if they had been adopted by the county legislative authority.

Community councils have no authority to take quasi-judicial actions or to decide permit applications. Community councils are subject to the Open Public Meetings Act. The county provides administrative staff and support for a council.

After four years, a vote must be taken on whether to retain the community council.

Only in counties with a population of over 30,000 that are made up entirely of islands may a community council be created.

**Summary of Bill:** A community council may be created in unincorporated areas of any county.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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

**Testimony For:** Crime prevention is an issue. Other unincorporated areas want the same rights as those surrounded by water. This works just as well for communities surrounded by land.

**Testimony Against:** When community councils were first implemented, they were an experiment. The jury is still out. Representation is an issue, but this may not be the answer. GMA has brought thousands of citizens into the process of local determination. If the problem is representation, allow the areas to incorporate.

**Testified:** Susan Hanson, CROWD (pro); Anita M. Day, CROWD Sec. (pro); Jim Williams, Master Builders (con); Debra Hedges, Graham Bus. Assoc. (pro); Gary Lowe, Assn. of Counties; Walter Balmer, Graham Bus. Assoc. (pro); Glen Hudson, WA Assoc. of Realtors (con).