

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1171

As Reported By House Committee On:

Local Government

Title: An act relating to annexations by less than county-wide port districts in areas having no registered voters.

Brief Description: Allowing port district annexations.

Sponsors: Representatives Alexander, Mielke, Doumit, Hatfield, Kessler, Pennington, DeBolt, Scott and D. Schmidt.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Local Government: 2/4/99, 2/22/99 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Authorizes two new methods of annexation for a port district that is less than county-wide and located in a county with a population fewer than 90,000 that is on the I-5 corridor.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 8 members: Representatives Mulliken, Republican Co-Chair; Scott, Democratic Co-Chair; Doumit, Democratic Vice Chair; Mielke, Republican Vice Chair; Edwards; Ericksen; Fisher and Fortunato.

Staff: Scott MacColl (786-7106).

Background:

Port districts that are less than county-wide may annex territory within the county under two different methods:

- By petition of the commissioners of the port district. A port district may issue a resolution of annexation and submit the petition to the county legislative authority.

The county legislative authority then holds an annexation vote for the voters in the proposed port district area.

- By petition of residents of an area representing 10 percent of registered voters in the last general election. The port district commission must issue a resolution for annexation and submit the petition to the county legislative authority. The county legislative authority then holds an annexation vote for the voters in the proposed port district area.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Two additional methods of annexation are authorized for port districts that are less than county-wide and located in a county with a population fewer than 90,000 that is in the I-5 corridor. The annexed property may not be taxed or assessed for payment of outstanding indebtedness of the port district under either new method.

In addition to the existing annexation methods, a port district may annex territory by either of the following methods:

- A port district may annex an area contiguous to port district boundaries that: (a) is not within another port district's boundaries; and (b) contains no registered voters the according to the following process:
 - The petition for annexation must be signed by registered owners of 75 percent of the property value of the area and filed with the port district commission. The port district commission must hold public hearings. The commission may require proof of a petition's authenticity and may require the signers of a petition to bear the cost of publishing and posting notice.
 - The port district commission has the option of annexing all or part of the proposed areas. Following the hearing, the commission must either approve or disapprove the annexation by resolution of the commission. When the commission files the resolution with the board of county commissioners, the annexation is final.
- A port district may annex an area contiguous to port boundaries for industrial development or other port purposes if that area is not served by another port district according to the following process:
 - The property may be annexed by a majority vote of the commission and with written consent of all the owners of the property to be annexed. The written consent must be filed with the commission.

- The port district commission may approve the annexation by resolution and without public hearings. Where the commission files the resolution with the board of county commissioners, the annexation is final.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

Authority for port districts that are less than county-wide to annex property under the new methods is limited to only include those port districts that are located in counties with a population fewer than 90,000 and in the I-5 corridor.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: This bill allows Lewis County's economic development corporation to purchase property owned by Weyerhaeuser, and annexation can't currently be done without a vote of the port district voters. The county needs buildable lands, and economic development is paramount for Lewis County. This area to be annexed has no registered voters and is needed due to growing unemployment in Lewis County.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative Alexander, prime sponsor; Scott Taylor, Washington Public Ports Association; and Heidi Pehl, Port of Chehalis.