

HB 1500 - DIGEST

Declares that the purpose of this act is to establish procedures for the orderly formation of new counties and to provide for an equitable apportionment of the debts, liabilities, and assets of the parent county or counties between the new county and the remaining portions or portions of each parent county.

Requires the proponent or proponents of a proposed new county to, before the circulation of a petition in support of the formation of that new county, file with the secretary of state a statement designating the name of the proposed county and containing the legal description of the proposed county, together with an affidavit from each proponent that he or she is a registered voter within the territory of the proposed county. If there are two or more proponents, one of them must be designated as the principal proponent for the purpose of receiving notices and communications required by law.

Provides that, upon receipt of the legal description and affidavit of sponsorship for a proposed new county, the secretary of state shall forward a copy of the legal description to the office of financial management.

Provides that, within thirty days of receipt of this request from the secretary of state, the director of the office of financial management shall determine if the legal description is consistent and the territory described is a single, contiguous area. If the legal description is defective, the director shall notify the secretary of state and the principal proponent of the nature and extent of the defect.

Provides that, if the legal description is not defective, the director shall also determine the population of the proposed new county and the population of the remaining portion or portions of each parent county, using the most current data available. The director shall certify these populations to the secretary of state and the principal proponent of the new county within thirty days of receipt of the request from the secretary of state.

Requires that a petition proposing the creation of a new county must be signed by at least fifty percent of the registered voters residing in the combined portions of each parent county from which territory is proposed to be stricken and included in the new county.

Declares that every person who signs a petition requesting the creation of a new county with any other than his or her true name is guilty of a class C felony punishable under chapter 9A.20 RCW.

Provides that every person who: (1) Knowingly signs more than one petition for the same effort to create a new county;

(2) Signs a petition requesting the creation of a new county knowing that he or she is not a legal voter; or

(3) Makes a false statement as to his or her residence on any petition requesting the creation of a new county, is guilty of a gross misdemeanor punishable under chapter 9A.20 RCW.

Repeals RCW 4.12.070, 36.09.010, 36.09.020, 36.09.035, 36.09.040, and 36.09.050.