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**Local Government Committee**

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**HB 1920**

**Brief Description:** Changing election procedures for larger port districts.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Dickerson, Nixon, Schual-Berke, Murray, Romero, Upthegrove and Chase.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Requires port districts having a population of 1,000,000 or more to be divided by commissioner districts.
- Only residents of the port district may vote for the candidate of that commissioner district at both the primary and general election.

**Hearing Date:** 3/3/03

**Staff:** Amy Wood (786-7127).

**Background:**

Port districts are authorized to acquire, build, maintain, operate, develop, and regulate the commercial transportation, transfer, storage, handling, and terminal facilities and industrial improvements within the district. Port districts may encompass the whole county or only part of the county.

A port district is governed by a port commission of either three or five non-partisan commissioners. The terms of the commissioners are staggered four or six-year terms.

Port districts having a population of 500,000 or more with county-wide port district boundaries do not have commissioner districts. The commissioners are elected at-large.

All other port districts have either three or five commissioner districts. These commissioners are elected in three ways: 1) from separate commissioner districts in the primary election, then at-large in the general election; 2) through a blend of commissioner districts and at-large; or 3) at-large, where a commissioner may live anywhere within the district.

The majority of Washington's port districts elect their port commissioners by commissioner

district. In 1994, however, the Legislature authorized port districts with less than county-wide port district boundaries to convert from commissioner districts to an at-large system upon approval of the voters of the district. Only county-wide port districts having a population of 500,000 or less must vote by commissioner district.

**Summary of Bill:**

Every port district having a population of 1,000,000 or more must have five commissioners and must be divided into five commissioner districts, each having approximately equal populations. Only residents of the commissioner district may vote for the commissioner of that district at both the primary and the general election.

Port commissioners who are holding office as of the effective date of this act may retain their positions for the remainder of their term until their successors are elected and qualified.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not Requested.

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