

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## SB 5411

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### C 160 L 13

Synopsis as Enacted

**Brief Description:** Requiring the ballot proposition to reduce the terms of office of port commissioners to be submitted at the next general election.

**Sponsors:** Senators Rolfes, Holmquist Newbry, Hatfield, Honeyford and Conway.

**Senate Committee on Governmental Operations**  
**House Committee on Government Operations & Elections**

**Background:** In 1911, the Legislature authorized the Port District Act allowing citizens to create port districts. Today, there are 75 port districts in Washington.

Port districts are authorized for the purpose of acquisition, construction, maintenance, operation, development, and regulation of harbor improvements, rail or motor vehicle transfer and terminal facilities, water and air transfer and terminal facilities, or any combination of these facilities. Port districts may:

- acquire land, property, leases, and easements;
- condemn property and exercise the power of eminent domain;
- develop lands for industrial and commercial purposes;
- impose taxes, rates, and charges;
- sell or otherwise convey rights to property; and
- construct and maintain specified types of park and recreation facilities.

Port districts are governed by a board of commissioners consisting of either three or five members in accordance with specified statutory criteria. Port commissioners are nominated either by a commissioner district or, under certain circumstances, at-large. In all districts, port commissioners are elected at-large. Subject to voter approval, a port district with five commissioners may be authorized to have two commissioners who are both nominated and elected at-large.

The voters in a port district may reduce the terms of office of port commissioners from six years to four years in a ballot proposition. The proposition may be introduced by a resolution of the port commissioners or by a petition signed by voters in the port district totaling at least 10 percent of the voters in the port district who voted in the previous general election. The ballot proposition is submitted at the next general or special election occurring 60 or more days after the commissioners adopt the resolution or voters submit the petition. If approved,

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any commissioners elected during that election and subsequent elections serve four-year terms of office, but the terms of office of sitting commissioners will not be reduced.

**Summary:** Ballot propositions to reduce the term of office of port commissioners may no longer be submitted for a vote at a special election.

**Votes on Final Passage:**

Senate	48	0
House	96	0

**Effective:** July 28, 2013