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**SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 6645**

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**State of Washington 64th Legislature 2016 Regular Session**

**By** Senate Government Operations & Security (originally sponsored by Senator Roach)

AN ACT Relating to allowing a city, town, code city, or county to request mediation in the event of a conflict with another city, town, code city, or county; adding a new section to chapter 35.21 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 35A.21 RCW; and adding a new section to chapter 36.01 RCW.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 35.21 RCW to read as follows:

When a city or town has a conflict with another city, town, code city, or county, the city or town may request from the attorney general's office the names of three mediators from which the city or town and the other city, town, code city, or county must choose a mediator, unless both jurisdictions agree to use another mediator. The attorney general's office must provide the names of three mediators within ten business days of receiving the request. When selecting the mediators, the attorney general's office may choose from any accepted list of mediators and is not required to issue a request for proposals. The mediator will hear the issues from both sides within thirty days of being selected. The mediation sessions must be held in a timely manner so as not to prolong the process. The mediator will render a binding decision based on the best interests of the taxpayers involved no later than ninety days after the last mediation session. The mediator may be granted an additional ten days to render a binding decision if requested by the mediator and agreed to by the city or town and the other city, town, code city, or county. The city or town and the other city, town, code city, or county must divide the costs of the mediator evenly between the two jurisdictions. The mediator may not add additional costs or obligations beyond the mediator's fee to the matter submitted for mediation.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 35A.21 RCW to read as follows:

When a code city has a conflict with another code city, city, town, or county, the code city may request from the attorney general's office the names of three mediators from which the code city and the other code city, city, town, or county must choose a mediator, unless both jurisdictions agree to use another mediator. The attorney general's office must provide the names of three mediators within ten business days of receiving the request. When selecting the mediators, the attorney general's office may choose from any accepted list of mediators and is not required to issue a request for proposals. The mediator will hear the issues from both sides within thirty days of being selected. The mediation sessions must be held in a timely manner so as not to prolong the process. The mediator will render a binding decision based on the best interests of the taxpayers involved no later than ninety days after the last mediation session. The mediator may be granted an additional ten days to render a binding decision if requested by the mediator and agreed to by the code city and the other code city, city, town, or county. The code city and the other code city, city, town, or county must divide the costs of the mediator evenly between the two jurisdictions. The mediator may not add additional costs or obligations beyond the mediator's fee to the matter submitted for mediation.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 36.01 RCW to read as follows:

When a county has a conflict with another county, code city, city, or town, the county may request from the attorney general's office the names of three mediators from which the county and the other county, code city, city, or town must choose a mediator, unless both jurisdictions agree to use another mediator. The attorney general's office must provide the names of three mediators within ten business days of receiving the request. When selecting the mediators, the attorney general's office may choose from any accepted list of mediators and is not required to issue a request for proposals. The mediator will hear the issues from both sides within thirty days of being selected. The mediation sessions must be held in a timely manner so as not to prolong the process. The mediator will render a binding decision based on the best interests of the taxpayers involved no later than ninety days after the last mediation session. The mediator may be granted an additional ten days to render a binding decision if requested by the mediator and agreed to by the county and the other county, code city, city, or town. The county and the other county, code city, city, or town must divide the costs of the mediator evenly between the two jurisdictions. The mediator may not add additional costs or obligations beyond the mediator's fee to the matter submitted for mediation.

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