

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5067

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Local Government, Land Use & Tribal Affairs, January 24, 2023

Title: An act relating to meetings of county legislative authorities.

Brief Description: Concerning meetings of county legislative authorities.

Sponsors: Senators Dozier, Boehnke, Fortunato, Hunt, King, Padden, Short, Stanford, Torres, Warnick and Wilson, J..

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Local Government, Land Use & Tribal Affairs: 1/12/23, 1/24/23 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Authorizes county legislative bodies to hold regular meetings outside of the county seat up to once per calendar month or per calendar quarter under certain circumstances.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT, LAND USE & TRIBAL AFFAIRS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Lovelett, Chair; Salomon, Vice Chair; Torres, Ranking Member; Kauffman and Short.

Staff: Maggie Douglas

Background: County legislative authorities are responsible for directing the short- and long-range policy goals and outcomes for the county government and its constituents.

County legislative authorities are required to hold all regular meetings at the county seat. A

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regular meeting is defined as a meeting that is held in accordance to a schedule adopted by ordinance, resolution, order, or rule by the county legislative authority. The legislative authority may, no more than once per calendar quarter, hold a regular meeting at a location outside of the county seat, but within the county if the county legislative authority determines that holding a meeting at an alternate location would be in the interests of supporting greater citizen engagement in local government. Notice of the meeting must be provided at least 30 days prior to the meeting on the county's website, in a newspaper of general circulation, and to any county resident who has asked to receive notice by electronic mail.

Summary of Bill: The county legislative authority may increase the frequency of holding regular meetings outside the county seat to no more than once per calendar month in a city with a population greater than the city in which the county seat is located, or once per calendar quarter in any other location. No more than one meeting per calendar month may be held at an alternate location.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Counties can use opportunities to hold meetings throughout smaller communities within the county to increase public participation, as holding meetings within a community can increase engagement and prevent residents from needing to travel across the county. In some counties, most of the population can be located away from the county seat. This leads to better dialogue and reduces barriers to participation.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Perry Dozier, Prime Sponsor; Jerome Delvin, Benton County.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.