

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## ESHB 1150

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*Synopsis as Enacted*

*C 146 L 92*

**Brief Description:** Clarifying port commissioner elections.

By House Committee on Local Government (originally sponsored by Representatives Spanel, Ferguson, Haugen, Wood, Nelson, Belcher, G. Fisher, Brough, Locke, H. Sommers, Wilson and Mitchell).

House Committee on Local Government  
Senate Committee on Governmental Operations

**Background:** A port district is governed by a three-member board of commissioners elected to staggered six-year terms of office, with one commissioner being elected in each odd-year general election. Voters of a port district with a population of 500,000 or more may authorize the size of the board of commissioners to be increased to five members. The ports of Seattle and Tacoma are the only ports with a population of 500,000 or more, and both have a five-member board of commissioners.

Port districts with a population of 500,000 or more are not divided into commissioner districts. However, port districts with a population of less than 500,000 are divided into three-commissioner districts. The purpose of the commissioner districts is unclear, but they are most frequently used for residency purposes only, and not for nominating or electing commissioners.

Several specific statutes pertaining to port district elections establish procedures that either duplicate or are not in conformance with the general election laws and procedures.

Port commissioners receive compensation of \$50 for attending commission meetings and \$50 per day or major portion of a day while engaged in other port district business. The maximum per day compensation that a port commissioner can receive in any year is \$4,800. However, commissioners of a port district with \$25 million in gross operating income in the previous year, such as the Port of Seattle and Port of Tacoma, may receive a maximum annual per day compensation of \$5,800.

The cost of group hospitalization and medical insurance is not considered additional compensation for county elected officials or employees.

**Summary:** Port district election laws are altered to conform with general election laws. The use of commissioner districts is clarified to be for both residency of commissioners and restricting voters who may vote at primaries, but are not used to restrict voters at general elections.

The terms of office are reduced from six years to four years for port commissioners of each countywide port district with a population of 100,000 or more. Voters in other port districts may vote to authorize a reduction in the terms of office of their port commissioners from six years to four years.

The voters of any port district may increase the size of the port commission from three to five members.

The maximum annual amount of per day compensation that a commissioner of a port district, with gross operating income of \$25 million or more in the previous year, may receive is increased from \$5,800 to \$6,000.

Additionally, some port commissioners shall receive a monthly salary as follows:

- (1) Each commissioner of a port district that had \$25 million or more in gross operating revenues in the preceding year, such as Seattle and Tacoma, shall receive \$500 per month; and
- (2) Each commissioner of a port district that had from \$1 million to less than \$25 million in gross operating revenues in the preceding year, such as Everett, Bellingham, Olympia, Longview, Port Angeles, Vancouver, Anacortes, and Grays Harbor shall receive \$200 per month.

The commissioners of other port districts do not receive a monthly salary. The commissioners of any port district may establish any level of compensation in lieu of the per day rate of compensation or monthly salary provided by statute.

The cost of group hospitalization and medical insurance coverage is not additional compensation for elected officials of special districts.

***Votes on Final Passage:***

House 83 15

Senate 40 6 (Senate amended)  
House 94 2 (House concurred)

*Effective:* June 11, 1992