

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESHB 1150

**AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS,
FEBRUARY 24, 1992**

Brief Description: Clarifying port commissioner elections.

SPONSORS: 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

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators McCaslin, Chairman; Madsen, and Matson.

Staff: Rod McAulay (786-7754)

Hearing Dates: February 24, 1992

BACKGROUND:

Port districts are governed by a board of commissioners elected to six-year staggered terms. The boards consist of three members elected from commissioner districts except that in counties with a population over 500,000, the voters may authorize the board to be expanded to five members, all elected at-large. The Port of Seattle and the Port of Tacoma have each exercised this option.

Port commissioners receive per diem compensation of \$50 with an annual cap of \$4,800 unless they are in a port with \$25 million in gross operating income in the previous calendar year in which event the annual cap is \$5,800.

SUMMARY:

A port district which is not a countywide district in a county with a population of 500,000 shall be divided into three commissioner districts of nearly equal population. If such a port district is countywide and the county has three county legislative authority districts, the port commissioner districts shall be the same as the county legislative authority districts. The voters of each district shall nominate candidates who are residents in their district. The nominated candidates are then elected at-large.

The terms of port district commissioners shall be four years except in districts which are not countywide or are in a county with a population of less than 100,000. In these other districts the commissioner terms shall remain at six years

unless reduced by a ballot proposition initiated either by resolution of the existing commissioners or petition signed by voters equal to 10 percent of those voting in the last district general election.

The number of commissioners in any port district may be increased to five if approved by a majority of the voters. Such action may be initiated by a petition signed by voters equal to 10 percent of those voters in the district who voted in the last general election.

In three commissioner port districts which expand to five commissioners, the two new commissioners shall be elected at-large. To assure that no more than three commissioners stand for election in any year, the new commissioner receiving the second most votes at the initial election shall serve a term two years shorter than the candidate who receives the most votes.

The annual ceiling on compensation for port district commissioners in districts with \$25 million or more in gross operating revenue during the previous calendar year is \$6,000.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: none requested

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED SENATE AMENDMENTS:

Redundant language is eliminated.

TESTIMONY FOR:

Four-year terms makes commissioners more accountable to electorate. It would make all districts consistent with each other. Bill is balanced.

TESTIMONY AGAINST:

Commissioner districts should be eliminated altogether. Commissioners should be permitted to set their own salaries without voter approval.

TESTIFIED: Representative Spanel; Don White, WA Public Ports Assn.; Dr. Sam Bradley, Port of Olympia Commissioner; Jeff Dickison, Port of Olympia Commissioner; Jim Boldt, Port of Tacoma