

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2632

As Passed House:

February 11, 2004

Title: An act relating to allowing special meetings to be called through electronic mail notice.

Brief Description: Allowing fax and electronic mail notice of special meetings.

Sponsors: By Representatives Clibborn, Nixon, Wallace, Edwards, Hunter, Lovick, Moeller, Upthegrove, Kagi and Hudgins.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government: 2/3/04 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/11/04, 94-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Allows notification of special public agency meetings to be made by fax or electronic mail.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Haigh, Chair; Miloscia, Vice Chair; Armstrong, Ranking Minority Member; Shabro, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Hunt, McDermott, Nixon, Tom and Wallace.

Staff: Matt Kuehn (786-7291).

Background:

The Open Public Meetings Act mandates that all actions and deliberations of all public agencies (public committees, subcommittees, boards, councils, departments, and divisions) occur openly. With the exception of specific executive sessions, meetings of the governing bodies of public agencies must be left open to the public.

Public agencies may have either regular, scheduled meetings or special meetings.

Regular meetings recur according to a pre-set schedule set by rule or law. Special meetings are all meetings that are not part of the regular, pre-set schedule.

Special meetings may be convened any time the presiding officer or a majority of the board chooses. To have a special meeting a public agency is required to give some notice to all members of the public agency as well as notify those local media outlets who have made written requests to be notified of the convening of special meetings.

The notice of the special meeting to the members of the committee and the media must be made 24 hours before the time of the meeting. It must be delivered personally or by mail.

Notice may be waived by members in writing. The notice may be waived by telegram.

Summary of Bill:

The bill expands the styles of notice that are acceptable for special meetings. In addition to personal or mailed written notice, special meetings may be convened by fax or electronic mail.

Waiver of notice by members must still be in writing. The waiver may be made by telegram, fax or electronic mail.

Notice must still be made to members and the media within the same time frame.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: The bill allows for the use of newer technology, such as electronic mail or faxes. There is no change in the time limit by which notice must be made, simply a change in the styles by which notice is acceptable. The current law is a burden on clerks of public agencies, who are forced to comply with the rigid personal service requirements. The bill adds to the ability to contact members and the media easily and in a timely fashion. The bill gives clerks more tools to notify members and the public.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Clibborn, prime sponsor; and Anne Noris, King

County Council.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.