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## Local Government & Housing Committee

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### HB 1066

**Brief Description:** Regarding special elections for changing the form of government of a noncharter code city.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Rolfes, Appleton and Moeller.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Brief Summary of Bill</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Authorizes an optional municipal code city to hold a special election for a the purpose of changing its form of government.</li></ul>
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**Hearing Date:** 1/15/09

**Staff:** Thamas Osborn (786-7129)

**Background:**

Created in 1967, the Optional Municipal Code (Title 35A RCW) provides an alternative to the basic statutory classification system of municipal government. It was designed to provide cities and towns with the option of adopting a system of governance that allows broad statutory home rule authority in matters of local concern. Any unincorporated area having a population of at least 1,500 may incorporate as an optional code city ("code city"), and any city or town may reorganize as a code city.

Washington cities and towns are organized under one of three principal forms of government:

- The *mayor-council* form, which consists of an elected mayor, who serves as the city's chief administrative officer, and a council which serves as the municipality's legislative body;
- The *council-manager* form, which consists of an elected city council which is responsible for legislation and policy making, and a professional city manager, appointed by the council, who is responsible for administration; and

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- The *commission form*, which authorizes the election of three commissioners who function collectively as the city legislative body and individually as department heads.

Any city may change its form of government by adopting another form authorized by statute. Generally, the procedure may be initiated either by a resolution adopted by the city council or by a petition process, and either process must be followed by an election on the issue of whether or not to adopt the proposed governmental change. The election for a proposed change of city government must take place at the next general election.

**Summary of Bill:**

Following a proposal for a change in a city's form of government, initiated either through a voter petition or by the decision of a city council, a code city may decide the issue through a special election held prior to the next general election pursuant to the resolution of the council.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 13, 2009

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