CERTIFICATION OF ENROLLMENT

SECOND SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1416

63rd Legislature 2013 Regular Session

Passed by the House April 22, 2013 Yeas 95 Nays 0 Speaker of the House of Representatives	I, Barbara Baker, Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives of the State of Washington, do hereby certify that the attached is SECONI SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1416 as passed by the House of Representatives and the Senate on the dates hereon set forth.
Passed by the Senate April 12, 2013 Yeas 48 Nays 0	
	Chief Clerk
President of the Senate	
Approved	FILED
Governor of the State of Washington	Secretary of State State of Washington

SECOND SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1416

AS AMENDED BY THE SENATE

Passed Legislature - 2013 Regular Session

State of Washington

63rd Legislature

2013 Regular Session

By House Finance (originally sponsored by Representatives Warnick, Manweller, Takko, Fagan, and Schmick)

READ FIRST TIME 03/01/13.

- 1 AN ACT Relating to the financing of irrigation district
- 2 improvements; amending RCW 84.34.310, 87.03.480, 87.03.485, 87.03.490,
- 3 87.03.495, 87.03.510, 87.03.515, 87.03.527, 87.06.020, 87.28.103,
- 4 87.28.200, and 89.12.050; and adding a new section to chapter 87.03
- 5 RCW.
- 6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:
- 7 NEW SECTION. Sec. 1. A new section is added to chapter 87.03 RCW
- 8 to read as follows:
- 9 Any local improvement district bonds, and interest thereon, issued
- 10 against a bond redemption fund of a local improvement district pursuant
- 11 to RCW 87.03.485 shall be a valid claim of the owner thereof only as
- 12 against the local improvement guarantee fund, the local improvement
- 13 district redemption fund, and the assessments or revenues pledged to
- 14 such fund or funds and do not constitute a general indebtedness against
- 15 the issuing irrigation district unless the board of directors by
- 16 resolution expressly provides for a pledge of general indebtedness.
- 17 Except where the board provides for a pledge of general indebtedness,
- 18 each such bond must state upon its face that it is payable from the

- local improvement district redemption fund and the local improvement quarantee fund only.
- 3 **Sec. 2.** RCW 84.34.310 and 1999 c 153 s 71 are each amended to read 4 as follows:

As used in RCW 84.34.300 through 84.34.380, unless a different meaning is required, the words defined in this section shall have the meanings indicated.

- 8 (1) "Farm and agricultural land" shall mean the same as defined in 9 RCW 84.34.020(2).
- 10 (2) "Timber land" shall mean the same as defined in RCW 84.34.020(3).
 - (3) "Local government" shall mean any city, town, county, watersewer district, public utility district, port district, ((irrigation district,)) flood control district, or any other municipal corporation, quasi-municipal corporation, or other political subdivision authorized to levy special benefit assessments for sanitary and/or storm sewerage systems, domestic water supply and/or distribution systems, or road construction or improvement purposes. "Local government" does not include an irrigation district with respect to any local improvement district created or local improvement assessment levied by that irrigation district.
 - (4) "Local improvement district" shall mean any local improvement district, utility local improvement district, local utility district, road improvement district, or any similar unit created by a local government for the purpose of levying special benefit assessments against property specially benefited by improvements relating to such districts.
- 28 (5) "Owner" shall mean the same as defined in RCW 84.34.020(5) or 29 the applicable statutes relating to special benefit assessments.
 - (6) The term "average rate of inflation" shall mean the annual rate of inflation as determined by the department of revenue averaged over the period of time as provided in RCW 84.34.330 (1) and (2). Such determination shall be published not later than January 1 of each year for use in that assessment year.
- 35 (7) "Special benefit assessments" shall mean special assessments 36 levied or capable of being levied in any local improvement district or 37 otherwise levied or capable of being levied by a local government to

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pay for all or part of the costs of a local improvement and which may be levied only for the special benefits to be realized by property by reason of that local improvement.

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Sec. 3. RCW 87.03.480 and 1959 c 75 s 9 are each amended to read as follows:

Any desired special construction, reconstruction, betterment or improvement or purchase or acquisition of improvements already constructed, for any authorized district service, including but not limited to the safeguarding of open canals or ditches for the protection of the public therefrom, which are for the special benefit of the lands tributary thereto and within an irrigation district may be constructed or acquired and provision made to meet the cost thereof as follows:

The holders of title or evidence of title to one-quarter of the acreage proposed to be assessed, may file with the district board their petition reciting the nature and general plan of the desired improvement and specifying the lands proposed to be specially assessed therefor. ((The petition shall be accompanied by a bond in the sum of one hundred dollars with surety to be approved by the board, conditioned that the petitioners will pay the cost of an investigation of the project and of the hearing thereon if it is not established. The board may at any time require a bond in an additional sum.)) local improvement district may include adjoining, vicinal, or neighboring improvements even though the improvements and the properties benefited are not connected or continuous. Such improvements may be owned by the United States, the state of Washington, the irrigation district, or another local government. Upon approval of the board of an adjoining irrigation district, an irrigation district may form local improvement districts or utility local improvement districts that are composed entirely or in part of territory within that adjoining district. Upon the filing of the petition the board, with the assistance of a competent engineer, shall make an investigation of the feasibility, cost, and need of the proposed local improvement together with the ability of the lands to pay the cost, and if it appears feasible, they ((shall)) may elect to have plans and an estimate of the cost prepared. If a protest against the establishment of the proposed improvement signed by a majority of

- 1 the holders of title in the proposed local district is presented at or
- 2 before the hearing, or if the proposed improvement should be found not
- 3 feasible, too expensive, or not in the best interest of the district,
- 4 or the lands to be benefited insufficient security for the costs, they
- 5 shall dismiss the petition ((at the expense of the petitioners)).

6 **Sec. 4.** RCW 87.03.485 and 1983 c 167 s 222 are each amended to read as follows:

In the event that the ((said)) board ((shall)) approves ((said))the petition, the board shall fix a time and place for the hearing thereof and shall publish a notice once a week for two consecutive weeks preceding the date of such hearing and the last publication shall not be more than seven days before such date and shall mail such a notice on or before the second publication date by first-class mail, postage prepaid, to each owner or reputed owner of real property within the proposed local improvement district, as shown on the rolls of the county treasurer as of a date not more than twenty days immediately prior to the date such notice was mailed. Such notice must be published in a newspaper of general circulation in each county in which any portion of the land proposed to be included in such local improvement district lies. Such notice shall state that the lands within ((said)) the described boundaries are proposed to be organized as a local improvement district, stating generally the nature of the proposed improvement; that bonds for such local improvement district are proposed to be issued as the bonds of the irrigation district, or that a contract is proposed to be entered into between the district and the United States or the state of Washington, or both, that the lands within ((said)) the local improvement district are to be assessed for such improvement, that such bonds or contract will be ((a primary)) the obligation of such local improvement district ((and a general obligation of the irrigation district)) and stating a time and place of hearing thereon. At the time and place of hearing named in ((said)) the notice, all persons interested may appear before the board and show cause for or against the formation of the proposed improvement district and the issuance of bonds or the entering into of a contract as aforesaid. The board may designate a hearing officer to conduct the hearing, and the hearing officer shall report recommendations on the establishment of the local improvement district to the board for final

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action. Upon the hearing the board shall determine as to the establishment of the proposed local improvement district. Any landowner whose lands can be served or will be benefited by the proposed improvement, may make application to the board at the time of hearing to include such land and the board of directors in such cases shall, at its discretion, include such lands within such district. The board of directors may exclude any land specified in ((said)) the notice from ((said)) the district provided, that in the judgment of the board, the inclusion thereof will not be practicable.

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As an alternative plan and subject to all of the provisions of this chapter, the board of directors may initiate the organization of a local improvement district as herein provided. To so organize a local improvement district the board shall adopt and record in its minutes a resolution specifying the lands proposed to be included in such local improvement district or by describing the exterior boundaries of such proposed district or by both. ((Said)) The resolution shall state generally the plan, character and extent of the proposed improvements, that the land proposed to be included in such improvement district will be assessed for such improvements; and that local improvement district bonds of the irrigation district will be issued or a contract entered into as hereinabove in this section provided to meet the cost thereof and that such bonds or contract will be ((a primary)) the obligation of such local improvement district ((and a general obligation of the irrigation district)). ((Said)) The resolution shall fix a time and place of hearing thereon and shall state that unless a majority of the holders of title or of evidence of title to lands within the proposed local improvement district file their written protest at or before ((said)) the hearing, consent to the improvement will be implied.

A notice containing a copy of ((said)) the resolution must be published once a week for two consecutive weeks preceding the date of such hearing and the last publication shall not be more than seven days before such date, and shall be mailed on or before the second publication date by first-class mail, postage prepaid, to each owner or reputed owner of real property within the proposed local improvement district, as shown on the rolls of the county treasurer as of a date not more than twenty days immediately prior to the date such notice was mailed, and the hearing thereon shall not be held in less than twenty days from the adoption of such resolution. Such notice must be

published in one newspaper, of general circulation, in each county in which any portion of the land proposed to be included in such local improvement district lies. ((Said)) The hearing shall be held and all subsequent proceedings conducted in accordance with the provisions of this act relating to the organization of local improvement districts initiated upon petition.

7 **Sec. 5.** RCW 87.03.490 and 2003 c 53 s 412 are each amended to read 8 as follows:

(1) If decision shall be rendered in favor of the improvement, the board shall enter an order establishing the boundaries of the improvement district and shall adopt plans for the proposed improvement and determine the number of annual installments not exceeding fifty in which the cost of the improvement shall be paid. The cost of the improvement shall be provided for by the issuance of local improvement district bonds of the district from time to time, therefor, either directly for the payment of the labor and material or for the securing of funds for such purpose, or by the irrigation district entering into a contract with the United States or the state of Washington, or both, to repay the cost of the improvement. The bonds shall bear interest at a rate or rates determined by the board, payable semiannually, and shall state upon their face that they are issued as bonds of the irrigation district; that all lands within the local improvement district shall be ((primarily)) liable to assessment for the principal and interest of the <u>local improvement district</u> bonds ((and that the bonds are also a general obligation of the district)). The bonds may be in such denominations as the board of directors may in its discretion determine, except that bonds other than bond number one of any issue shall be in a denomination that is a multiple of one ((hundred)) thousand dollars((, and no bond shall be sold for less than par. Any contract entered into for the local improvement by the district with the United States or the state of Washington, or both although all the lands within the local improvement district shall be primarily liable to assessment for the principal and interest thereon, shall be a general obligation of the irrigation district)). Such bonds may be in any form, including bearer bonds or registered bonds as provided in RCW 39.46.030.

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(2) No election shall be necessary to authorize the issuance of such local improvement bonds or the entering into of such a contract. ((Such bonds, when issued, shall be signed by the president and secretary of the irrigation district with the seal of the district affixed. The printed, engraved, or lithographed facsimile signatures of the president and secretary of the district's board of directors shall be sufficient signatures on the bonds or any coupons: PROVIDED, That such facsimile signatures on the bonds may be used only after the filing, by the officer whose facsimile signature is to be used, with the secretary of state of his or her manual signature certified by him or her under oath, whereupon that officer's facsimile signature has the same legal effect as his or her manual signature: PROVIDED, FURTHER, That either the president of the board of directors' or the secretary's signature on the bonds shall be manually subscribed: AND PROVIDED FURTHER, That whenever such facsimile reproduction of the signature of any officer is used in place of the manual signature of such officer, the district's board of directors shall specify in a written order or requisition to the printer, engraver, or lithographer the number of bonds or any coupons upon which such facsimile signature is to be printed, engraved, or lithographed and the manner of numbering the bonds or any coupons upon which such signature shall be placed. Within ninety days after the completion of the printing, engraving, or lithographing of such bonds or any coupons, the plate or plates used for the purpose of affixing the facsimile signature shall be destroyed, and it shall be the duty of the district's board of directors, within ninety days after receipt of the completed bonds or any coupons, to ascertain that such plate or plates have been destroyed. Every printer, engraver, or lithographer who, with the intent to defraud, prints, engraves, or lithographs a facsimile signature upon any bond or coupon without written order of the district's board of directors, or fails to destroy such plate or plates containing the facsimile signature upon direction of such issuing authority, is guilty of a class B felony punishable according to chapter 9A.20 RCW.))

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(3) The proceeds from the sale of such bonds shall be deposited with the treasurer of the district, who shall place them in a special fund designated "Construction fund of local improvement district number "

- (4) Whenever such improvement district has been organized, the 1 2 ((boundaries thereof may be enlarged)) board may enlarge the boundaries of the improvement district to include other lands which can be served 3 4 or will be benefited by the proposed improvement upon petition of the owners thereof and the consent of the United States or the state of 5 6 Washington, or both, in the event the irrigation district has contracted with the United States or the state of Washington, or both, 7 8 to repay the cost of the improvement: PROVIDED, That at such time the 9 lands so included shall pay their equitable proportion upon the basis 10 benefits of the improvement theretofore made by the local improvement district and shall be liable for the indebtedness of the 11 12 local improvement district in the same proportion and same manner and 13 subject to assessment as if the lands had been incorporated in the improvement district at the beginning of its organization. 14
- 15 (5) Notwithstanding this section, such bonds may be issued and sold 16 in accordance with chapter 39.46 RCW.
- 17 **Sec. 6.** RCW 87.03.495 and 1988 c 127 s 45 are each amended to read 18 as follows:
 - (1)(a) The cost of the improvement and of the operation and maintenance thereof, if any, shall be especially assessed against the lands within such local improvement district in proportion to the benefits accruing thereto, and shall be levied and collected in the manner provided by law for the levy and collection of land assessments or toll assessments or both such form of assessments.
- 25 (b) The costs of the improvement must include, but not be limited 26 to:
- 27 <u>(i) The cost of all of the construction or improvement authorized</u> 28 <u>for the district;</u>
- 29 <u>(ii) The estimated cost and expense of all engineering and</u>
 30 <u>surveying necessary for the improvement done under the supervision of</u>
 31 <u>the irrigation district engineer;</u>
- (iii) The estimated cost and expense of ascertaining the ownership of the lots or parcels of land included in the assessment district;
- (iv) The estimated cost and expense of advertising, mailing, and publishing all necessary notices;
- 36 (v) The estimated cost and expense of accounting and clerical

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1 labor, and of books and blanks extended or used on the part of the
2 irrigation district treasurer in connection with the improvement;

(vi) All cost of the acquisition of rights-of-way, property, easements, or other facilities or rights, including without limitation rights to use property, facilities, or other improvements appurtenant, related to, or useful in connection with the local improvement, whether by eminent domain, purchase, gift, payment of connection charges, capacity charges, or other similar charges or in any other manner; and

(vii) The cost for legal, financial, and appraisal services and any other expenses incurred by the irrigation district for the district or in the formation thereof, or by irrigation district in connection with such construction or improvement and in the financing thereof, including the issuance of any bonds and the cost of providing for increases in the local improvement guaranty fund, or providing for a separate reserve fund or other security for the payment of principal of and interest on such bonds.

- (c) Any of the costs set forth in this section may be excluded from the cost and expense to be assessed against the property in the local improvement district and may be paid from any other moneys available therefor if the board of directors so designates by resolution at any time.
- (d) The board may give credit for all or any portion of any property or other donation against an assessment, charge, or other required financial contribution for improvements within a local improvement district.
- (2) All provisions for the assessment, equalization, levy, and collection of assessments for irrigation district purposes shall be applicable to assessments for local improvements except that no election shall be required to authorize ((said)) the improvement or the expenditures therefor or the bonds issued to meet the cost thereof or the contract authorized in RCW 87.03.485 to repay the cost thereof. In addition or as an alternative, an irrigation district may elect to apply all or a portion of the provisions for the assessment, equalization, levy, and collection of assessments applicable to city or town local improvement districts; however any duties of the city or town treasurer shall be the duties of the treasurer of the county in which the office of the district is located or other treasurer of the district if appointed pursuant to RCW 87.03.440. In connection with a

- hearing on the assessment roll, the board may designate a hearing officer to conduct the hearing, and the hearing officer must report recommendations on the assessment roll to the board for final action.

 Assessments when collected by the county treasurer for the payment for the improvement of any local improvement district shall constitute a special fund to be called "bond redemption or contract repayment fund of local improvement district No. "
 - (3) Bonds issued under this chapter shall be eligible for disposal to and purchase by the director of ecology under the provisions of the state reclamation act.
 - cost or any unpaid portion thereof, of (4) The any such improvement, charged or to be charged or assessed against any tract of land may be paid in one payment under and pursuant to such rules as the board of directors may adopt, and all such amounts shall be paid over to the county treasurer who shall place the same in the appropriate No such payment shall thereby release such tract from liability to assessment for deficiencies or delinquencies of the levies in such improvement district until all of the bonds or the contract, both principal and interest, issued or entered into for such local improvement district have been paid in full. The receipt given for any such payment shall have the foregoing provision printed thereon. amount so paid shall be included on the annual assessment roll for the current year, provided, such roll has not then been delivered to the treasurer, with an appropriate notation by the secretary that the amount has been paid. If the roll for that year has been delivered to the treasurer then the payment so made shall be added to the next annual assessment roll with appropriate notation that the amount has been paid.

29 **Sec. 7.** RCW 87.03.510 and 1983 c 167 s 224 are each amended to 30 read as follows:

There is hereby established for each irrigation district in this state having local improvement districts therein a fund for the purpose of guaranteeing to the extent of such fund and in the manner herein provided, the payment of its local improvement bonds and warrants issued or contract entered into to pay for the improvements provided for in this act. Such fund shall be designated "local improvement guarantee fund" and for the purpose of maintaining the same, every

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irrigation district shall hereafter levy from time to time, as other 1 2 assessments authorized by RCW 87.03.240 are levied, such sums as may be necessary to meet the financial requirements thereof: PROVIDED, That 3 4 such sums so assessed pursuant to RCW 87.03.240 in any year shall not be more than sufficient to pay the outstanding warrants or contract 5 6 indebtedness on ((said)) the fund and to establish therein a balance 7 which shall not exceed ((five)) ten percent of the outstanding obligations thereby guaranteed. The balance may also be established 8 9 from the deposit of prepaid local improvement assessments or proceeds of local improvement district bonds. Whenever any bond redemption 10 payment, interest payment, or contract payment of any local improvement 11 12 district shall become due and there is insufficient funds in the local 13 improvement district fund for the payment thereof, there shall be paid from ((said)) the local improvement district guarantee fund, by warrant 14 or by such other means as is called for in the contract, a sufficient 15 amount, which together with the balance in the local improvement 16 district fund shall be sufficient to redeem and pay ((said)) the bond 17 or coupon or contract payment in full. ((Said)) The warrants against 18 19 ((said)) the guarantee fund shall draw interest at a rate determined by the board and ((said)) the bonds and interest payments shall be paid in 20 21 their order of presentation or serial order. Whenever there shall be 22 paid out of the guarantee fund any sum on account of principal or 23 interest of a local improvement bond or warrant or contract the 24 irrigation district, as trustee for the fund, shall be subrogated to all of the rights of the owner of the bond or contract amount so paid, 25 26 and the proceeds thereof, or of the assessment underlying the same 27 shall become part of the guarantee fund. There shall also be paid into such guarantee fund any interest received from bank deposits of the 28 fund, as well as any surplus remaining in any local improvement 29 30 district fund, after the payment of all of its outstanding bonds or warrants or contract indebtedness which are payable primarily out of 31 32 such local improvement district fund.

Sec. 8. RCW 87.03.515 and 1983 c 167 s 225 are each amended to read as follows:

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It shall be lawful for any irrigation district which has issued local improvement district bonds for ((said)) the improvements, as in this chapter provided, to issue in place thereof an amount of

- ((general)) local improvement district or revenue refunding bonds of 1 the irrigation district ((not in excess of such issue of local 2 improvement district bonds, and to sell the same, or any part thereof, 3 4 or exchange the same, or any part thereof, with the owners of such previously issued local improvement district bonds for the purpose of 5 6 redeeming said bonds)) in accordance with chapter 39.53 RCW: PROVIDED, HOWEVER, ((That all the provisions of this chapter regarding the 7 8 authorization and issuing of bonds shall apply, and: PROVIDING, 9 FURTHER,)) That the issuance of ((said)) the bonds shall not release the lands of the local improvement district or districts from liability 10 for special assessments for the payment thereof: AND PROVIDED FURTHER, 11 12 That the lien of any issue of bonds of the district prior in point of 13 time to the issue of bonds or local improvement district bonds herein 14 provided for (7) shall be deemed a prior lien.
- 15 **Sec. 9.** RCW 87.03.527 and 1959 c 104 s 7 are each amended to read 16 as follows:
- 17 Whenever ((a local improvement district is sought to be established within an irrigation)) the board establishes a local improvement 18 district, in addition or as an alternative to the procedures provided 19 20 in RCW 87.03.480 through 87.03.525, there may be employed any method 21 authorized by law for the formation of ((districts or)) improvement 22 districts ((so that when formed it will qualify under the provisions of 23 chapter 89.16 RCW)) and the levying, collection, and enforcement by foreclosure of assessments therein, including without limitation the 24 25 formation method employed by cities or towns.
- 26 **Sec. 10.** RCW 87.06.020 and 1988 c 134 s 2 are each amended to read 27 as follows:
- 28 (1) After thirty-six calendar months from the month of the date of 29 delinquency, or twenty-four months from the month of the date of delinquency with respect to any local improvement district assessment, 30 the treasurer shall prepare certificates of delinquency on the property 31 for the unpaid irrigation district assessments, and for costs and 32 33 interest. An individual certificate of delinquency may be prepared for 34 each property or the individual certificates may be compiled and issued 35 in one general certificate including all delinquent properties. 36 certificate shall contain the following information:

- 1 (a) Description of the property assessed;
 - (b) Street address of property, if available;
- 3 (c) Years for which assessed;

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- 4 (d) Amount of delinquent assessments, costs, and interest;
- 5 (e) Name appearing on the treasurer's most current assessment roll 6 for the property; and
- (f) A statement that interest will be charged on the amount listed in (d) of this subsection at a rate of twelve percent per year, computed monthly and without compounding, from the date of the issuance of the certificate and that additional costs, incurred as a result of the delinquency, will be imposed, including the costs of a title search($(\dot{\tau})$).
- 13 (2) The treasurer may provide for the posting of the certificates 14 or other measures designed to advertise the certificates and encourage 15 the payment of the amounts due.
 - Sec. 11. RCW 87.28.103 and 1979 ex.s. c 185 s 14 are each amended to read as follows:

When the directors of the district have decided to issue revenue bonds as herein provided, they shall call a special election in the irrigation district at which election shall be submitted to the electors thereof possessing the qualifications prescribed by law the question whether revenue bonds of the district in the amount and payable according to the plan of payment adopted by the board and for the purposes therein stated shall be issued. ((Said)) The election shall be called, noticed, conducted, and canvassed in the same manner as provided by law for irrigation district elections to authorize an original issue of bonds payable from revenues derived from annual assessments upon the real property in the district: PROVIDED, That the board of directors shall have full authority to issue revenue bonds as herein provided payable within a maximum period of forty years without a special election((: AND PROVIDED, FURTHER, That any irrigation district indebted to the state of Washington shall get the written consent of the director of the department of ecology prior to the issuance of said revenue bonds)).

35 **Sec. 12.** RCW 87.28.200 and 1979 ex.s. c 185 s 19 are each amended to read as follows:

Any irrigation district shall have the power to establish utility 1 2 local improvement districts within its territory and to levy special assessments within such utility local improvement districts in the same 3 4 manner as provided for irrigation district local improvement districts: 5 PROVIDED, That it must be specified in any petition for the establishment of a utility local improvement district that the sole 6 7 purpose of the assessments levied against the real property located 8 within the utility local improvement district shall be the payment of the proceeds of those assessments into ((the)) <u>a</u> revenue bond fund for 9 10 the payment of revenue bonds, that no warrants or bonds shall be issued in any such utility local improvement district, and that the collection 11 12 of interest and principal on all assessments in such utility local 13 improvement district, when collected, shall be paid into ((the)) that 14 revenue bond fund, except that special assessments paid before the issuance and sale of bonds may be deposited in a fund for the payment 15 of costs of improvements in the utility local improvement district. 16

- Sec. 13. RCW 89.12.050 and 2009 c 145 s 3 are each amended to read as follows:
- (1) A district may enter into repayment and other contracts with the United States under the terms of the federal reclamation laws in matters relating to federal reclamation projects, and may with respect to lands within its boundaries include in the contract, among others, an agreement that:
- (a) The district will not deliver water by means of the project works provided by the United States to or for excess lands not eligible therefor under applicable federal law.
- (b) As a condition to receiving water by means of the project works, each excess landowner in the district, unless his excess lands are otherwise eligible to receive water under applicable federal law, shall be required to execute a recordable contract covering all of his excess lands within the district.
- (c) All excess lands within the district not eligible to receive water by means of the project works shall be subject to assessment in the same manner and to the same extent as lands eligible to receive water, subject to such provisions as the secretary may prescribe for postponement in payment of all or part of the assessment but not beyond

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a date five years from the time water would have become available for such lands had they been eligible therefor.

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- (d) The secretary is authorized to amend any existing contract, deed, or other document to conform to the provisions of applicable federal law as it now exists. Any such amendment may be filed for record under RCW 89.12.080.
- (2) A district may enter into a contract with the United States for the transfer of operations and maintenance of the works of a federal reclamation project, but the contract does not impute to the district negligence for design or construction defects or deficiencies of the transferred works. Any contract, covenant, promise, agreement, or understanding purporting to indemnify against liability for damages caused by or resulting from the negligent acts or omissions of the United States, its employees, or agents is not enforceable unless expressly authorized by state law.
- NEW SECTION. **Sec. 14.** If any provision of this act or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected.

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