
Local Government Committee

HB 1145

Brief Description: Allowing joint meetings of county legislative authorities under certain circumstances.

Sponsors: Representatives Haler and Fey.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Authorizes two or more county legislative authorities to hold joint regular or special meetings solely in the county seat of a participating county if the agenda item or items relate to actions or considerations of mutual interest or concern to the participating legislative authorities.
- Allows counties participating in these joint regular or special meetings to retain their current authority to transact official business at the meeting.

Hearing Date: 1/21/15

Staff: Ethan Moreno (786-7386).

Background:

Counties - Regular and Special Meetings of Legislative Authorities.

Washington counties provide regional services to all residents within their jurisdiction, including administering elections and furnishing judicial services, and a broader array of services to residents in unincorporated areas.

County legislative authorities are required to hold regular meetings at the county seat to transact any business required or permitted by law. Although the term "regular meeting" is not defined in statutory provisions governing counties, the Municipal Research and Services Center defines "regular meeting" as one that is held according to a schedule, adopted as appropriate, by the applicable public governing body.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Contrary to the geographic limitations on regular meetings, county legislative authorities may hold special meetings (meetings that are not held according to an adopted schedule) to transact the business of the county at any location within the county if the agenda item or items are of unique interest or concern to the citizens of the area of the county in which the special meeting is to be held.

Neither regular nor special meeting provisions for counties include permissions, requirements, or other governing conditions related to joint meetings of county legislative authorities in a single location.

Attorney General Opinion.

On November 14, 2014, the Attorney General of Washington issued an opinion (AGO 2014, No. 7) stating that the legislative authority of one county may not meet outside its borders, and within another county's borders, to discuss joint, bi-county projects. The opinion also stated that the Legislature could authorize these joint meetings, but that it has not yet done so.

Summary of Bill:

Any two or more county legislative authorities may hold a joint regular or special meeting solely in the county seat of a participating county if the agenda item or items relate to actions or considerations of mutual interest or concern to the participating legislative authorities.

In the event of a joint regular meeting, each participating county retains its authority to transact any business required or permitted by law. In the event of a joint special meeting, each county retains its authority to transact business of the county.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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