

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1145

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Government Operations & Security, March 30, 2015

Title: An act relating to joint meetings of county legislative authorities.

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

Sponsors: House Committee on Local Government (originally sponsored by Representatives Haler and Fey).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/11/15, 98-0.

Committee Activity: Government Operations & Security: 3/24/15, 3/30/15 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & SECURITY

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Roach, Chair; Benton, Vice Chair; Pearson, Vice Chair; Liias, Ranking Minority Member; Dandel, Habib and McCoy.

Staff: Sam Thompson (786-7413)

Background: County legislative authorities, including county councils and boards of county commissioners, hold regular meetings at county seats to transact business required or permitted by law. They may hold special meetings at the county seat or other locations in the county. However, under an interpretation of current law, certain actions, including adoption of ordinances, can only be taken in regular meetings.

For regular meetings, county legislative authorities must adopt meeting schedules and provide agendas at least 24 hours in advance. For special meetings, county legislative authorities must provide notice at least 24 hours in advance to requesting media, on the county website, and at meeting sites. Final action may not be taken on any matter not in the special meeting notice.

In 2014 the Attorney General opined that a county legislative authority may generally not hold a joint meeting outside of its county with another county legislative authority. The opinion noted certain exceptions, including provisions authorizing joint meetings regarding intercounty rural library districts and joint flood control operations. The Attorney General

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also opined that county legislative authorities may conduct joint meetings using videoconferencing.

Summary of Bill: Two or more county legislative authorities may hold joint regular or special meetings to transact business if an agenda item is of shared interest or concern.

A joint regular meeting may be held in the county seat of a participating county. For a joint regular meeting, a legislative authority meeting outside of its county must comply with special meeting notice requirements.

A joint special meeting may be held at the county seat or other location in a participating county.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: County legislative authorities should have general authority to conduct joint meetings on matters of shared interest, such as emergency communications systems.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Haler, prime sponsor.

Persons Signed in to Testify But Not Testifying: No one.