

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## ESB 5453

---

---

C 462 L 19  
Synopsis as Enacted

**Brief Description:** Concerning the administration of irrigation districts.

**Sponsors:** Senators Takko and Short.

**Senate Committee on Local Government**  
**House Committee on Local Government**

**Background:** Irrigation Districts. An irrigation district is a type of special purpose district with broad statutory authorization to engage in a wide range of activities and provide a myriad of services. Generally, irrigation districts provide for the construction, improvement, maintenance, and operation of irrigation systems. Irrigation districts also may provide drainage, domestic water supply, and electric power facilities. Districts may finance their operations and actions through fees, charges, and assessments, but districts do not have the authority to impose property taxes.

Each director must take and subscribe an official oath for the faithful discharge of the duties of their office, and must execute a \$1,000 bond to the district, conditioned for the faithful discharge of their duties. The oath and bond must be approved by a superior court judge, recorded in the office of the county clerk, and filed with the secretary of the board of directors. The secretary must then also execute a bond of not less than \$1,000. If a district is appointed fiscal agent of the United States to collect money for it, the secretary, directors, and the district treasurer must each execute such additional bonds as the Secretary of the Interior may require. All bonds must be secured at the cost of the district.

The board of directors must contract for work on behalf of the irrigation district. Notice calling for sealed proposals must be published in appropriate newspapers at least once a week for two weeks. The sealed bids must be opened publicly at a time and place appointed in the notice. The board must then award the contract to the lowest responsible bidder, reject all bids and readvertise, or construct the work under its own superintendence.

**Summary:** All provisions related to the execution of bonds with respect to irrigation district directors are removed. In addition, official oaths need no longer be approved by a superior court judge or recorded in the office of the county clerk.

---

*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.*

Regarding contracts for irrigation district work, if no bid is received on the first call the board of directors may readvertise and make a second call or may enter into a contract without any further call.

By December 1, 2019, the Washington Association of County Officials must study and make recommendations to standardize irrigation district election methods. At a minimum, recommendations must include procedures to:

- identify qualified voters and directors;
- notify qualified voters and directors;
- deliver and return ballots;
- identify and count official returns; and
- declare the winning candidate.

**Votes on Final Passage:**

Senate	48	0	
House	95	0	(House amended)
Senate	48	0	(Senate concurred)

**Effective:** July 28, 2019