
SENATE BILL 5151

State of Washington

66th Legislature

2019 Regular Session

By Senators Wilson, L., Becker, Honeyford, Zeiger, and Short

Prefiled 01/11/19. Read first time 01/14/19. Referred to Committee on Local Government.

1 AN ACT Relating to requiring the growth management hearings board
2 to topically index the rulings, decisions, and orders it publishes;
3 and reenacting and amending RCW 36.70A.270.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 **Sec. 1.** RCW 36.70A.270 and 2010 c 211 s 6 and 2010 c 210 s 16
6 are each reenacted and amended to read as follows:

7 The growth management hearings board shall be governed by the
8 following rules on conduct and procedure:

9 (1) Any board member may be removed for inefficiency,
10 malfeasance, and misfeasance in office, under specific written
11 charges filed by the governor. The governor shall transmit such
12 written charges to the member accused and the chief justice of the
13 supreme court. The chief justice shall thereupon designate a tribunal
14 composed of three judges of the superior court to hear and adjudicate
15 the charges. Removal of any member of the board by the tribunal shall
16 disqualify such member for reappointment.

17 (2) Each board member shall receive reimbursement for travel
18 expenses incurred in the discharge of his or her duties in accordance
19 with RCW 43.03.050 and 43.03.060. Each member shall receive an annual
20 salary to be determined by the governor pursuant to RCW 43.03.040.
21 The principal office of the board shall be located in Olympia.

1 (3) Each board member shall not: (a) Be a candidate for or hold
2 any other public office or trust; (b) engage in any occupation or
3 business interfering with or inconsistent with his or her duty as a
4 board member; and (c) for a period of one year after the termination
5 of his or her board membership, act in a representative capacity
6 before the board on any matter.

7 (4) A majority of the board shall constitute a quorum for
8 adopting rules necessary for the conduct of its powers and duties or
9 transacting other official business, and may act even though one
10 position of the board is vacant. One or more members may hold
11 hearings and take testimony to be reported for action by the board
12 when authorized by rule or order of the board. The board shall
13 perform all the powers and duties specified in this chapter or as
14 otherwise provided by law.

15 (5) The board may use one or more hearing examiners to assist the
16 board in its hearing function, to make conclusions of law and
17 findings of fact and, if requested by the board, to make
18 recommendations to the board for decisions in cases before the board.
19 Such hearing examiners must have demonstrated knowledge of land use
20 planning and law. The board shall specify in its rules of practice
21 and procedure, as required by subsection (7) of this section, the
22 procedure and criteria to be employed for designating hearing
23 examiners as a presiding officer. Hearing examiners used by the board
24 shall meet the requirements of subsection (3) of this section. The
25 findings and conclusions of the hearing examiner shall not become
26 final until they have been formally approved by the board. This
27 authorization to use hearing examiners does not waive the requirement
28 of RCW 36.70A.300 that final orders be issued within one hundred
29 eighty days of board receipt of a petition.

30 (6) The board shall make findings of fact and prepare a written
31 decision in each case decided by it, and such findings and decision
32 shall be effective upon being signed by two or more members of the
33 regional panel deciding the particular case and upon being filed at
34 the board's principal office, and shall be open for public inspection
35 at all reasonable times.

36 (7) All proceedings before the board, any of its members, or a
37 hearing examiner appointed by the board shall be conducted in
38 accordance with such administrative rules of practice and procedure
39 as the board prescribes. The board shall develop and adopt rules of
40 practice and procedure, including rules regarding expeditious and

1 summary disposition of appeals and the assignment of cases to
2 regional panels. The board shall publish such rules and decisions it
3 renders (~~and~~). All published rules and decisions must be indexed
4 topically and by party. Finally, the board shall arrange for the
5 reasonable distribution of the rules and decisions reasonably soon
6 after issuance. All rulings, decisions, and orders issued before the
7 beginning of 2019 shall be published by the conclusion of the year
8 2019. Except as it conflicts with specific provisions of this
9 chapter, the administrative procedure act, chapter 34.05 RCW, and
10 specifically including the provisions of RCW 34.05.455 governing ex
11 parte communications, shall govern the practice and procedure of the
12 board.

13 (8) A board member or hearing examiner is subject to
14 disqualification under chapter 34.05 RCW. The rules of practice of
15 the board shall establish procedures by which a party to a hearing
16 conducted before the board may file with the board a motion to
17 disqualify, with supporting affidavit, against a board member or
18 hearing examiner assigned to preside at the hearing.

19 (9) All members of the board shall meet on at least an annual
20 basis with the objective of sharing information that promotes the
21 goals and purposes of this chapter.

22 (10) The board shall annually elect one of its members to be the
23 board administrative officer. The duties and responsibilities of the
24 administrative officer include handling day-to-day administrative,
25 budget, and personnel matters on behalf of the board, together with
26 making case assignments to board members in accordance with the
27 board's rules of procedure in order to achieve a fair and balanced
28 workload among all board members. The administrative officer of the
29 board may carry a reduced caseload to allow time for performing the
30 administrative work functions.

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