
HOUSE BILL 1985

State of Washington

69th Legislature

2025 Regular Session

By Representatives Parshley and Reed

Read first time 02/17/25. Referred to Committee on Local Government.

1 AN ACT Relating to the creation of animal services districts; and
2 adding a new chapter to Title 35 RCW.

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

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** An animal services district may be created
5 for the purpose of sheltering, medical care, adoption services, pet
6 licensing, temporary emergency housing, and humane law enforcement.
7 An animal services district may include territory located in portions
8 or all of one or more cities or counties, or one or more cities and
9 counties, when created or enlarged as provided in this chapter.

10 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) When proposed by citizen petition or
11 by local government resolution as provided in this section, a ballot
12 proposition authorizing the creation of an animal services district
13 must be submitted by resolution to the voters of the area proposed to
14 be included in the district at any general election, or at any
15 special election which may be called for that purpose.

16 (2) The ballot proposition must be submitted if the governing
17 body of each city in which all or a portion of the proposed district
18 is located, and the legislative authority of each county in which all
19 or a portion of the proposed district is located within the

1 unincorporated portion of the county, each adopts a resolution
2 submitting the proposition to create an animal services district.

3 (3) As an alternative to the method provided under subsection (2)
4 of this section, the ballot proposition must be submitted if a
5 petition proposing creation of an animal services district is
6 submitted to the county auditor of each county in which all or a
7 portion of the proposed district is located that is signed by at
8 least 15 percent of the registered voters residing in the area to be
9 included within the proposed district. Where the petition is for
10 creation of a district in more than one county, the petition must be
11 filed with the county auditor of the county having the greater area
12 of the proposed district, and a copy filed with each other county
13 auditor of the other counties covering the proposed district.

14 (4) Territory by virtue of its annexation to any city whose
15 territory lies entirely within an animal services district are deemed
16 to be within the limits of the animal services district.

17 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** If a majority of the voters voting on the
18 ballot proposition authorizing the creation of the animal services
19 district vote in favor of the formation of an animal services
20 district, the animal services district must be created as a municipal
21 corporation effective immediately upon certification of the election
22 results and its name must be that designated in the ballot
23 proposition. When an ex officio treasurer of an animal services
24 district is a city or county treasurer, the treasurer may provide a
25 bridge loan or line of credit to the newly formed animal services
26 district until such time as the district has received sufficient levy
27 proceeds to pay for the maintenance and operations of the animal
28 services district.

29 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** (1) The resolution or petition submitting
30 the ballot proposition must designate the composition of the board of
31 animal services commissioners from among the alternatives provided
32 under subsections (2) through (4) of this section. The ballot
33 proposition must clearly describe the designated composition of the
34 board.

35 (2) The commissioners of the district may be selected by
36 election, in which case at the same election at which the proposition
37 is submitted to the voters as to whether an animal services district
38 is to be formed, five animal services commissioners are elected. The

1 election of animal services commissioners is null and void if the
2 animal services district is not created. Candidates must run for
3 specific commission positions. No primary may be held to nominate
4 candidates. The person receiving the greatest number of votes for
5 each position is elected as a commissioner. The staggering of the
6 terms of office occurs as follows: (a) The two persons who are
7 elected receiving the two greatest numbers of votes are elected to
8 six-year terms of office if the election is held in an odd-numbered
9 year or five-year terms of office if the election is held in an even
10 numbered year; (b) the two persons who are elected receiving the next
11 two greatest numbers of votes are elected to four-year terms of
12 office if the election is held in an odd-numbered year or three-year
13 terms of office if the election is held in an even-numbered year; and
14 (c) the other person who is elected is elected to a two-year term of
15 office if the election is held in an odd-numbered year or a one-year
16 term of office if the election is held in an even-numbered year. The
17 initial commissioners take office immediately when they are elected
18 and qualified, and for purposes of computing their terms of office
19 the terms are assumed to commence on the first day of January in the
20 year after they are elected. Thereafter, all commissioners are
21 elected to six-year terms of office. All commissioners serve until
22 their respective successors are elected and qualified and assume
23 office in accordance with RCW 29A.60.280. Vacancies occur and are
24 filled as provided in chapter 42.12 RCW.

25 (3) In a district wholly located within a city or within the
26 unincorporated area of a county, the governing body of such city or
27 legislative authority of such county may be designated to serve in an
28 ex officio capacity as the board of animal services commissioners,
29 provided that when creation of the district is proposed by citizen
30 petition, the city or county approves by resolution such designation.

31 (4) Where the proposed district is located within more than one
32 city, more than one county, or any combination of cities and
33 counties, each city governing body and county legislative authority
34 may be designated to collectively serve ex officio as the board of
35 animal services commissioners through selection of one or more
36 members from each to serve as the board, provided that when creation
37 of the district is proposed by citizen petition, each city governing
38 body and county legislative authority approve by resolution such
39 designation. Within six months of the date of certification of
40 election results approving creation of the district, the size and

1 membership of the board must be determined through interlocal
2 agreement of each city and county. The interlocal agreement must
3 specify the method for filling vacancies on the board.

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** The manner of holding any general or
5 special election in an animal services district must be in accordance
6 with the general election laws of this state insofar as they are not
7 inconsistent with the provisions of this chapter.

8 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** Every animal services district through its
9 board of commissioners may contract indebtedness and evidence such
10 indebtedness by the issuance and sale of warrants, short-term
11 obligations as provided by chapter 39.50 RCW, or general obligation
12 bonds, for any purposes authorized for such animal services district
13 and the extension and maintenance thereof, not exceeding, together
14 with all other outstanding nonvoter approved general indebtedness,
15 one-quarter of one percent of the value of the taxable property in
16 such animal services district, as the term "value of the taxable
17 property" is defined in RCW 39.36.015. General obligation bonds may
18 not be issued with a maximum term in excess of the maximum term set
19 forth in chapter 39.46 RCW. Such general obligation bonds must be
20 issued and sold in accordance with chapter 39.46 RCW.

21 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7.** Every animal services district may
22 contract indebtedness not exceeding in amount, together with existing
23 voter-approved indebtedness and nonvoter-approved indebtedness, equal
24 to two and one-half percent of the value of the taxable property in
25 said district, as the term "value of the taxable property" is defined
26 in RCW 39.36.015, whenever three fifths of the voters voting at an
27 election held in the animal services district assent thereto; the
28 election may be either a special or a general election, and the
29 animal services commissioners of the animal services district may
30 cause the question of incurring such indebtedness, and issuing
31 negotiable bonds of such animal services district, to be submitted to
32 the qualified voters of the district at any time.

33 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 8.** An animal services district may issue and
34 sell revenue bonds as provided in chapter 39.46 RCW to be made
35 payable from the operating revenues of the animal services district.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 9.** (1) The county treasurer of the county
2 within which all, or the major portion, of the district lies must be
3 the ex officio treasurer of an animal services district, but may
4 receive no compensation other than his or her regular salary for
5 receiving and disbursing the funds of an animal services district.

6 (2) An animal services district may designate someone other than
7 the county treasurer who has experience in financial or fiscal
8 affairs to act as the district treasurer if the board has received
9 the approval of the county treasurer to designate this person; or if
10 the district boundaries are coterminous with the boundaries of a
11 city, the city may act as the district treasurer. If the board
12 designates someone other than a county or city treasurer to act as
13 the district treasurer, the board must purchase a bond from a surety
14 company operating in the state that is sufficient to protect the
15 district from loss.

16 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 10.** Whenever there is money in the animal
17 services district fund and the commissioners of the animal services
18 district deem it advisable to apply any part thereof to the payment
19 of bonded indebtedness, they must advertise in a newspaper of general
20 circulation within the animal services district for the presentation
21 to them for payment of as many bonds as they may desire to pay with
22 the funds on hand, the bonds to be paid in numerical order, beginning
23 with the lowest number outstanding and called by number. The bonds
24 cease to bear interest 30 days after the first publication of the
25 notice by the board calling in bonds, and this must be stated in the
26 notice.

27 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 11.** Any coupons for the payment of interest
28 on animal services district bonds must be considered for all purposes
29 as warrants drawn upon the animal services district fund against
30 which the bonds were issued, and when presented after maturity to the
31 treasurer of the county having custody of the fund. If there are no
32 funds in the treasury to pay the coupons, the county treasurer shall
33 endorse said coupons as presented for payment, in the same manner as
34 county warrants are endorsed, and thereafter the coupon bears
35 interest at the same rate as the bond to which it was attached. If
36 there are no funds in the treasury to make payment on a bond not
37 having coupons, the interest payment continues bearing interest at

1 the bond rate until it is paid, unless otherwise provided in the
2 proceedings authorizing the sale of the bonds.

3 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 12.** (1) The board of animal services
4 commissioners may levy or cause to be levied a general tax on all the
5 property located in said animal services district each year not to
6 exceed 25 cents per thousand dollars of assessed value of the
7 property in such animal services district.

8 (2) The board of animal services commissioners is hereby
9 authorized to levy a general tax in excess of its regular property
10 tax levy or levies when authorized so to do at a special election
11 conducted in accordance with and subject to all the requirements of
12 the Constitution and laws of the state now in force or hereafter
13 enacted governing the limitation of tax levies. The board is hereby
14 authorized to call a special election for the purpose of submitting
15 to the qualified voters of the animal services district a proposition
16 to levy a tax in excess of the regular levy rates authorized for the
17 district under subsection (1) of this section. The manner of
18 submitting any such proposition, of certifying the same, and of
19 giving or publishing notice thereof, must be as provided by law for
20 the submission of propositions by cities, towns, or counties.

21 (3) The board of animal services commissioners must include in
22 its general tax levy for each year a sufficient sum to pay the
23 interest on all outstanding bonds and may include a sufficient amount
24 to create a sinking fund for the redemption of all outstanding bonds.
25 The levy must be certified to the proper county officials for
26 collection the same as other general taxes and, for any animal
27 services district for which the county treasurer serves as the ex
28 officio treasurer, when collected, the general tax must be placed in
29 a separate fund in the office of the county treasurer to be known as
30 the "animal services district fund" and disbursed under RCW
31 36.29.010(1)(a) and 39.58.750.

32 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 13.** The assessment for local improvements
33 authorized by this chapter becomes a lien in the same manner, and is
34 governed by the same law, as is provided for local assessments in
35 cities of the first class and must be collected as such assessments
36 are collected.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 14.** The territory adjoining an animal
2 services district may be annexed to and become a part thereof upon
3 petition and an election held pursuant thereto. The petition must
4 define the territory proposed to be annexed and must be signed by 25
5 registered voters, resident within the territory proposed to be
6 annexed, unless the territory is within the limits of another city
7 when it must be signed by 20 percent of the registered voters
8 residing within the territory proposed to be annexed. The petition
9 must be addressed to the board of animal services commissioners
10 requesting that the question be submitted to the legal voters of the
11 territory proposed to be annexed, whether they will be annexed and
12 become a part of the animal services district.

13 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 15.** Upon the filing of an annexation petition
14 with the board of animal services commissioners, if the commissioners
15 concur in the petition, they shall provide for a hearing to be held
16 for the discussion of the proposed annexation at the office of the
17 board of animal services commissioners, and shall give due notice
18 thereof by publication at least once a week for two consecutive weeks
19 before the hearing in a newspaper of general circulation in the
20 animal services district.

21 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 16.** If the board of animal services
22 commissioners concur in the petition, they shall cause the proposal
23 to be submitted to the electors of the territory proposed to be
24 annexed, at an election to be held in the territory, which must be
25 called, canvassed, and conducted in accordance with the general
26 election laws. The board of animal services commissioners by
27 resolution shall fix a time for the holding of the election to
28 determine the question of annexation, and in addition to the notice
29 required by RCW 29A.52.355 shall give notice thereof by causing
30 notice to be published once a week for two consecutive weeks in a
31 newspaper of general circulation in the animal services district, and
32 by posting notices in five public places within the territory
33 proposed to be annexed in the district.

34 The ballot to be used at the election must be in the following
35 form:

- 36 " For annexation to animal services district.
37 Against annexation to animal services district."

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 17.** The board of animal services
2 commissioners of any animal services district which includes a city
3 with a population greater than 100,000 may submit to the electorate
4 of the territory sought to be annexed a proposition that all property
5 within the area annexed, upon annexation, be assessed and taxed at
6 the same rate and on the same basis as the property of such annexing
7 animal services district to pay for all or any portion of the then
8 outstanding indebtedness of the animal services district.

9 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 18.** The canvassing authority shall cause a
10 statement of the result of such election to be forwarded to the board
11 of animal services commissioners for entry on the record of the
12 board. If the majority of the votes cast upon that question at the
13 election favor annexation, the territory immediately becomes annexed
14 to the animal services district, and is thenceforth a part of the
15 animal services district, the same as though originally included in
16 the district. The expense of such election must be paid out of animal
17 services district funds.

18 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 19.** A board of commissioners of an animal
19 services district may, upon a majority vote of all its members,
20 dissolve in its entirety any animal services district, prorate the
21 liabilities thereof, and turn over to the city and/or county so much
22 of the district as is respectively located therein, when:

23 (1) Such city and/or county, through its governing officials,
24 agrees to, and petitions for, such dissolution and the assumption of
25 such assets and liabilities; or

26 (2) Ten percent of the voters of such city and/or county who
27 voted at the last general election petition the governing officials
28 for such a vote.

29 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 20.** (1) As provided in this section, an
30 animal services district may withdraw areas from its boundaries, or
31 reannex areas into the animal services district that previously had
32 been withdrawn from the animal services district under this section.

33 (2) The withdrawal of an area is authorized upon:

34 (a) Adoption of a resolution by the animal services district
35 commissioners requesting the withdrawal and finding that, in the
36 opinion of the commissioners, inclusion of this area within the

1 animal services district will result in a reduction of the district's
2 tax levy rate under the provisions of RCW 84.52.010; and

3 (b) Adoption of a resolution by the city or town council
4 approving the withdrawal, if the area is located within the city or
5 town, or adoption of a resolution by the county legislative authority
6 of the county within which the area is located approving the
7 withdrawal, if the area is located outside of a city or town. A
8 withdrawal is effective at the end of the day on the 31st day of
9 December in the year in which the resolutions are adopted, but for
10 purposes of establishing boundaries for property tax purposes, the
11 boundaries are established immediately upon the adoption of the
12 second resolution. The withdrawal of an area from the boundaries of
13 an animal services district does not exempt any property therein from
14 taxation for the purpose of paying the costs of redeeming any
15 indebtedness of the animal services district existing at the time of
16 the withdrawal.

17 (3) An area that has been withdrawn from the boundaries of an
18 animal services district under this section may be reannexed into the
19 animal services district upon:

20 (a) Adoption of a resolution by the animal services district
21 commissioners proposing the reannexation; and

22 (b) Adoption of a resolution by the city or town council
23 approving the reannexation, if the area is located within the city or
24 town, or adoption of a resolution by the county legislative authority
25 of the county within which the area is located approving the
26 reannexation, if the area is located outside of a city or town. The
27 reannexation is effective at the end of the day on the 31st day of
28 December in the year in which the adoption of the second resolution
29 occurs, but for purposes of establishing boundaries for property tax
30 purposes, the boundaries are established immediately upon the
31 adoption of the second resolution. Referendum action on the proposed
32 reannexation may be taken by the voters of the area proposed to be
33 reannexed if a petition calling for a referendum is filed with the
34 city or town council, or county legislative authority, within a 30-
35 day period after the adoption of the second resolution, which
36 petition has been signed by registered voters of the area proposed to
37 be reannexed equal in number to ten percent of the total number of
38 the registered voters residing in that area.

39 (4) If a valid petition signed by the requisite number of
40 registered voters has been filed under subsection (3)(b) of this

1 section, the effect of the resolutions must be held in abeyance and a
2 ballot proposition to authorize the reannexation must be submitted to
3 the voters of the area at the next special election date according to
4 RCW 29A.04.330. Approval of the ballot proposition authorizing the
5 reannexation by a simple majority vote authorizes the reannexation.

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 21.** (1) As provided in this section, a city,
7 town, or county may withdraw that portion of the city, town, or
8 county from an animal services district that was formed under this
9 chapter when:

10 (a) The governing body of a district, which is part of the
11 district, adopts a resolution and findings of fact supporting the
12 deannexation of that portion of the city, town, or county, which is
13 part of the district; and the governing body of a city, town, or
14 county, which is part of the district, adopts a resolution and
15 findings of fact supporting the deannexation of that portion of the
16 city, town, or county, which is part of the district;

17 (b) Ten percent of the voters of such city or county who voted at
18 the last general election petition the governing officials for such a
19 vote; or

20 (c) A district located in a county with a population of 200,000
21 or more has not actively carried out any of the special purposes or
22 functions for which it was formed within the preceding consecutive
23 five-year period.

24 (2)(a) After adoption of the resolution approving the
25 deannexation, receipt of a valid petition signed by the requisite
26 number of registered voters, or determination that the district has
27 been inactive, the governing body of the city, town, or county, which
28 is part of the district, must draft a ballot title, give notice as
29 required by law for ballot measures, and perform other duties as
30 required to put the measure approving or not approving the
31 deannexation before the voters of the city, town, or county, which is
32 part of the district.

33 (b) The ballot proposition authorizing the deannexation from a
34 proposed animal services district must be submitted to the voters of
35 the district for their approval or rejection at the next general
36 election. The ballot measure is approved if greater than 50 percent
37 of the total persons voting on the ballot measure vote to approve the
38 deannexation.

1 (3) The resolution under subsection (1) of this section and the
2 ballot under subsection (2) of this section must set forth the
3 specific land boundaries being deannexed from the district.

4 (4) A deannexation under this section is effective at the end of
5 the day on the 31st day of December in the year in which the ballot
6 measure under subsection (2) of this section is approved.

7 (5) The withdrawal of an area from the boundaries of an animal
8 services district does not exempt any property therein from taxation
9 for the purpose of paying the costs of redeeming any indebtedness of
10 the animal services district existing at the time of the withdrawal.

11 (6) (a) An area that has been withdrawn from the boundaries of an
12 animal services district under this section may be reannexed into the
13 animal services district upon:

14 (i) Adoption of a resolution by the governing body proposing the
15 reannexation; and

16 (ii) Adoption of a resolution by the animal services district
17 approving the reannexation.

18 (b) The reannexation is effective at the end of the day on the
19 31st day of December in the year in which the adoption of the second
20 resolution occurs, but for purposes of establishing boundaries for
21 property tax purposes, the boundaries are established immediately
22 upon the adoption of the second resolution.

23 (c) Referendum action on the proposed reannexation may be taken
24 by the voters of the area proposed to be reannexed if a petition
25 calling for a referendum is filed with the animal services district,
26 within a 30-day period after the adoption of the second resolution,
27 which petition has been signed by registered voters of the area
28 proposed to be reannexed equal in number to ten percent of the total
29 number of the registered voters residing in that area.

30 (d) If a valid petition signed by the requisite number of
31 registered voters has been so filed, the effect of the resolutions
32 must be held in abeyance and a ballot proposition to authorize the
33 reannexation must be submitted to the voters of the area at the next
34 special election date according to RCW 29A.04.330. Approval of the
35 ballot proposition authorizing the reannexation by a simple majority
36 vote authorizes the reannexation.

37 (7) For purposes of this section, "deannex" means to withdraw a
38 specified portion of land from an animal services district formed
39 under this chapter.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 22.** Sections 1 through 21 of this act
2 constitute a new chapter in Title 35 RCW.

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