
HOUSE BILL 2520

State of Washington

69th Legislature

2026 Regular Session

By Representatives Lekanoff, Eslick, Parshley, Pollet, Donaghy, Ramel, and Scott

Read first time 01/16/26. Referred to Committee on State Government & Tribal Relations.

1 AN ACT Relating to emergency meetings of public agencies; and
2 amending RCW 36.32.090, 42.30.060, and 42.30.230.

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

4 **Sec. 1.** RCW 36.32.090 and 2015 c 74 s 2 are each amended to read
5 as follows:

6 (1) The county legislative authority of each county may hold
7 special meetings at the county seat or at a location designated in
8 accordance with subsection (2) or (3) of this section to transact the
9 business of the county. Notice of a special meeting shall be made as
10 provided in RCW 42.30.080.

11 (2) A special meeting may be held outside of the county seat at
12 any location within the county if the agenda item or items are of
13 unique interest or concern to the citizens of the portion of the
14 county in which the special meeting is to be held.

15 (3) Any two or more county legislative authorities may hold a
16 joint special meeting at the county seat or other agreed upon
17 location within the jurisdiction of a participating county if the
18 agenda item or items relate to actions or considerations of mutual
19 interest or concern to the participating legislative authorities.

20 (4) The legislative authority of each county may hold a special
21 meeting outside of the county seat, or remotely, when necessary to

1 take expedited action needed to meet an emergency. Notice of such a
2 meeting must be made as provided for in RCW 42.30.080, unless such
3 notice is not required pursuant to RCW 42.30.070 and 42.30.080(4).
4 The minutes of any such meeting must be recorded and open to public
5 inspection as provided for in RCW 42.30.035.

6 **Sec. 2.** RCW 42.30.060 and 1989 c 42 s 1 are each amended to read
7 as follows:

8 (1) (~~NO~~) Except when expedited action is necessary to meet an
9 emergency and is taken in compliance with the requirements of this
10 chapter, no governing body of a public agency shall adopt any
11 ordinance, resolution, rule, regulation, order, or directive, except
12 in a meeting open to the public and then only at a meeting, the date
13 of which is fixed by law or rule, or at a meeting of which notice has
14 been given according to the provisions of this chapter. Any action
15 taken at meetings failing to comply with the provisions of this
16 subsection shall be null and void.

17 (2) No governing body of a public agency at any meeting required
18 to be open to the public shall vote by secret ballot. Any vote taken
19 in violation of this subsection shall be null and void, and shall be
20 considered an "action" under this chapter.

21 **Sec. 3.** RCW 42.30.230 and 2022 c 115 s 5 are each amended to
22 read as follows:

23 (1) If, after the declaration of an emergency by a local or state
24 government or agency, or by the federal government, a public agency
25 determines that it cannot hold a meeting of the governing body with
26 members or public attendance in person with reasonable safety because
27 of the emergency, the public agency may:

28 (a) Hold a remote meeting of the governing body without a
29 physical location; or

30 (b) Hold a meeting of the governing body at which the physical
31 attendance by some or all members of the public is limited due to a
32 declared emergency.

33 (2) During a remote meeting, members of the governing body may
34 appear or attend by phone or by other electronic means that allows
35 real-time verbal communication without being in the same physical
36 location. For a remote meeting or a meeting at which the physical
37 attendance by some or all members of the public is limited due to a
38 declared emergency, the public agency must provide an option for the

1 public to listen to the proceedings telephonically or by using a
2 readily available alternative in real-time that does not require any
3 additional cost for participation. Free readily available options
4 include, but are not limited to, broadcast by the public agency on a
5 locally available cable television station that is available
6 throughout the jurisdiction or other electronic, internet, or other
7 means of remote access that does not require any additional cost for
8 access to the program. The public agency may also allow the other
9 electronic means of remote access.

10 (3) No action may be taken at a remote meeting or a meeting at
11 which the physical attendance by some or all members of the public is
12 limited due to a declared emergency if the public agency has not
13 provided an option for the public to listen to proceedings pursuant
14 to subsection (2) of this section, except for an executive session as
15 authorized in this chapter and for action taken in order to meet an
16 emergency as provided for in RCW 42.30.070.

17 (4) Notice of a remote meeting without a physical location or a
18 meeting at which the physical attendance by some or all members of
19 the public is limited due to a declared emergency must be provided in
20 accordance with this chapter and must include instructions on how the
21 public may listen live to proceedings and on how the public may
22 access any other electronic means of remote access offered by the
23 public agency.

24 (5) A remote meeting or a meeting at which the physical
25 attendance by some or all members of the public is limited due to a
26 declared emergency that is held under the provisions of this section
27 shall be considered open and public in compliance with the
28 requirements of this chapter. Nothing in this section alters the
29 ability of public agencies to take action at a remote meeting or a
30 meeting at which the physical attendance by some or all members of
31 the public is limited in response to an emergency as provided for in
32 RCW 42.30.070, or to have members of a governing body participate in
33 a meeting remotely with no declared emergency.

34 (6) Notwithstanding any other provision in this section, any
35 governing body of a public agency which held some of its regular
36 meetings remotely prior to March 1, 2020, may continue to hold some
37 of its regular meetings remotely with no declared emergency so long

1 as the public agency provides an option for the public to listen to
2 the proceedings pursuant to subsection (2) of this section.

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