

RCW 39.106.040 Corporate powers of authorities. (1) For the purpose of performing or providing utility services, and subject to subsection (3) of this section and RCW 39.106.050, an authority has and is entitled to exercise the following powers:

(a) To sue and be sued, complain and defend, in its corporate name;

(b) To have a corporate seal which may be altered at pleasure, and to use the same by causing it, or a facsimile thereof, to be impressed or affixed or in any other manner reproduced;

(c) To purchase, take, receive, take by lease, condemn, receive by grant, or otherwise acquire, and to own, hold, improve, use, operate, maintain, add to, extend, and fully control the use of and otherwise deal in and with, real or personal property or property rights, including without limitation water and water rights, or other assets, or any interest therein, wherever situated;

(d) To sell, convey, lease out, exchange, transfer, surplus, and otherwise dispose of all or any part of its property and assets;

(e) To incur liabilities for any of its utility services purposes, to borrow money at such rates of interest as the authority may determine, to issue its bonds, notes, and other obligations, and to pledge any or all of its revenues to the repayment of bonds, notes, and other obligations;

(f) To enter into contracts for any of its utility services purposes with any individual or entity, both public and private, and to enter into intergovernmental agreements with its members and with other public agencies;

(g) To be eligible to apply for and to receive state, federal, and private grants, loans, and assistance that any of its members are eligible to receive in connection with the development, design, acquisition, construction, maintenance, and/or operation of facilities and programs for utility services;

(h) To adopt and alter rules, policies, and guidelines, not inconsistent with this chapter or with other laws of this state, for the administration and regulation of the affairs and assets of the authority;

(i) To obtain insurance, to self-insure, and to participate in pool insurance programs;

(j) To indemnify any officer, director, employee, volunteer, or former officer, employee, or volunteer, or any member, for acts, errors, or omissions performed in the exercise of their duties in the manner approved by the board;

(k) To employ such persons, as public employees, that the board determines are needed to carry out the authority's purposes and to fix wages, salaries, and benefits, and to establish any bond requirements for those employees;

(l) To provide for and pay pensions and participate in pension plans and other benefit plans for any or all of its officers or employees, as public employees;

(m) To determine and impose fees, rates, and charges for its utility services;

(n) Subject to RCW 39.106.050(20), to have a lien for delinquent and unpaid rates and charges for retail connections and retail utility service to the public, together with recording fees and penalties (not exceeding eight percent) determined by the board, including interest (at a rate determined by the board) on such rates, charges, fees, and penalties, against the premises to which such service has been furnished or is available, which lien shall be superior to all other

liens and encumbrances except general taxes and local and special assessments;

(o) To make expenditures to promote and advertise its programs, educate its members, customers, and the general public, and provide and support conservation and other practices in connection with providing utility services;

(p) With the consent of the member within whose geographic boundaries an authority is so acting, to compel all property owners within an area served by a wastewater collection system owned or operated by an authority to connect their private drain and sewer systems with that system, or to participate in and follow the requirements of an inspection and maintenance program for on-site systems, and to pay associated rates and charges, under such terms and conditions, and such penalties, as the board shall prescribe by resolution;

(q) With the consent of the member within whose geographic or service area boundaries an authority is so acting, to create local improvement districts or utility local improvement districts, to impose and collect assessments and to issue bonds and notes, all consistent with the statutes governing local improvement districts or utility local improvement districts applicable to the member that has provided such consent. Notwithstanding this subsection (1)(q), the guaranty fund provisions of chapter 35.54 RCW shall not apply to a local improvement district created by an authority;

(r) To receive contributions or other transfers of real and personal property and property rights, money, other assets, and franchise rights, wherever situated, from its members or from any other person;

(s) To prepare and submit plans relating to utility services on behalf of itself or its members;

(t) To terminate its operations, wind up its affairs, dissolve, and provide for the handling and distribution of its assets and liabilities in a manner consistent with the applicable agreement;

(u) To transfer its assets, rights, obligations, and liabilities to a successor entity, including without limitation a successor authority or municipal corporation;

(v) Subject to subsection (3) of this section, RCW 39.106.050, and applicable law, to have and exercise any other corporate powers capable of being exercised by any of its members in providing utility services.

(2) An authority, as a municipal corporation, is subject to the public records act (chapter 42.56 RCW), the open public meetings act (chapter 42.30 RCW), and the code of ethics for municipal officers (chapter 42.23 RCW), and an authority is subject to audit by the state auditor under chapter 43.09 RCW.

(3) In the exercise of its powers in connection with performing or providing utility services, an authority is subject to the following:

(a) An authority has no power to levy taxes.

(b) An authority has the power of eminent domain as necessary to perform or provide utility services, but only if all of its members, other than tribal government members, have powers of eminent domain. Further, an authority may exercise the power of eminent domain only pursuant to the provisions of Washington law, in the manner and subject to the statutory limitations applicable to one or more of its Washington local government members. If all of its members are the same type of Washington governmental entity, then the statute

governing the exercise of eminent domain by that type of entity shall govern. An authority may not exercise the power of eminent domain with respect to property owned by a city, town, county, special purpose district, authority, or other unit of local government, but may acquire or use such property under mutually agreed upon terms and conditions.

(c) An authority may pledge its revenues in connection with its obligations, and may acquire property or property rights through and subject to the terms of a conditional sales contract, a real estate contract, or a financing contract under chapter 39.94 RCW, or other federal or state financing program. However, an authority must not in any other manner mortgage or provide security interests in its real or personal property or property rights. As a local governmental entity without taxing power, an authority may not issue general obligation bonds. However, an authority may pledge its full faith and credit to the payment of amounts due pursuant to a financing contract under chapter 39.94 RCW or other federal or state financing program.

(d) In order for an authority to provide a particular utility service in a geographical area, one or more of its members must have authority, under applicable law, to provide that utility service in that geographical area.

(e) As a separate municipal corporation, an authority's obligations and liabilities are its own and are not obligations or liabilities of its members except to the extent and in the manner established under the provisions of an agreement or otherwise expressly provided by contract.

(f) Upon its dissolution, after provision is made for an authority's liabilities, remaining assets must be distributed to a successor entity, or to one or more of the members, or to another public body of this state. [2011 c 258 s 4.]