

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6368

As Passed Senate, February 6, 1996

Title: An act relating to community councils.

Brief Description: Authorizing islands within Puget Sound and in larger counties to have community councils.

Sponsors: Senators Heavey and Haugen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Government Operations: 1/22/96, 1/31/96 [DP, DNP]
Passed Senate, 2/6/96, 47-1.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Haugen, Chair; Sheldon, Goings, Hale, Heavey and Winsley.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senator McCaslin.

Staff: Katie Healy (786-7403)

Background: A community council must have at least 1,000 people residing within an unincorporated community. It is created by the filing of a petition, signed by at least 10 percent of those who voted in the last state general election. If the petition is valid, the county legislative authority must call a special election to determine whether a community council shall be created and to elect from five to 11 initial council members. Council members' terms are for four years and elections are nonpartisan.

If created, the county legislative authority must adopt an ordinance establishing policies and conditions and designate portions of the county comprehensive plan and zoning ordinances that serve as an overall guide and framework for the development of proposed community comprehensive plans and proposed community zoning ordinances. Proposed community comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances adopted by a community council must be submitted to the county legislative authority for review of consistency with the county ordinance. Approved community comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances are enforced by the county as if they had been adopted by the county legislative authority.

Community councils have no authority to take quasi-judicial actions or to decide permit applications. Community councils are subject to the Open Public Meetings Act. The county provides administrative staff and support for a council.

After four years, a vote must be taken on whether to retain the community council.

Only in counties with a population of over 30,000 that are made up entirely of islands may a community council be created.

Summary of Bill: An addition is made to the requirement that the communities have a population of over 30,000 and be made up entirely of islands. Unincorporated areas on islands within Puget Sound with over 1,500 residents and located in counties with a population of over 1,500,000 are also authorized to establish community councils. The definition of community is expanded to include this requirement.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: This bill adds a saltwater island to the areas which may have community councils. The GMA took away Vashon Island's ability to incorporate. Community councils are working well. This would cause no problem for King County. Vashon Island needs to be better able to manage its own water and growth needs. The people need a voice.

Testimony Against: When community councils were first implemented, they were designed as an experiment. The jury is still out. Representation is an issue, but this may not be an answer. GMA has brought thousands of citizens into the process of local determination. If the problem is representation, then give the areas the ability to incorporate.

Testified: Jim Williams, Master Builders; Keith Putnam, Pat Britz, J. P. Anderson, Vashon CC (pro); Carol Salkind, Vashon Water Purveyors (pro); Gary Lowe, Assn. of Counties; Glen Hudson, WA Assoc. of Realtors (con).