

Public Records Act: Five-Day Rule

SUPPORT: HB (XXXX) Requiring public records requests be submitted to an agency's public records officer in order to be subject to the five day response rule.



Port Districts:

Washington's 75 port districts are independent government entities subject to the Public Records Act. Many ports have limited full-time staff and do not have the financial resources for automated records management systems.

Background:

The amount of time and financial resources spent responding to public records requests continues to grow.



\$136 MILLION

Spent by agencies & local governments in 2023 responding to records requests



1.2 MILLION

Estimated total staff hours spent in 2023 responding to records requests

Source: JLARC PRA Report

WASHINGTON PUBLIC

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CHALLENGES



RCW 42.56.520 requires agencies & local governments to respond to public records requests within five days. Many ports have part-time or seasonal employees who do not have the training or capacity to respond to public records requests. Additionally, public records request submitted to general purpose email or postal addresses may result in delayed or inadequate responses.

SOLUTIONS



Currently, each agency or local government is required to designate a public records officer. This person is trained and has the knowledge and resources to appropriately respond to these requests. HB (XXXX) would provide the public with greater certainty that their request is going to the right person and will be dealt with in a timely fashion.

That's Why:

Passage of HB (XXXX) would give port districts a clear process for responding to requests, promoting transparency and open government, and assisting requestors with getting their requested records.

SUPPORT



HB XXXX

Sponsored by Representative Hackney

Ensuring that public records requests go to the designated public records officer.