

Twyla Melton

From: Kathy Griesmyer <kgriesmyer@cityofboise.org>
Sent: Sunday, February 21, 2021 7:02 PM
To: Senator Patti Anne Lodge; Senator Mark Harris; Senator Jim Guthrie; Senator Lee Heider; Senator Chuck Winder; Senator Kelly Anthon; Senator Abby Lee; Senator Michelle Stennett; Senator Grant Burgoyne
Cc: Twyla Melton
Subject: Support SB 1111 - Testimony from City of Boise
Attachments: SB 1111 testimony.pdf

Members of the Senate State Affairs Committee –

In advance of tomorrow's hearing on SB 1111, attached and below please find my testimony highlighting the City of Boise's support for this legislation. If you have any questions about our position, please don't hesitate to reach me at 208-890-3800. Thank you! – Kathy

Testimony of Kathy Griesmyer
Before Senate State Affairs Committee
SUPPORT SB 1111: Technical Corrections to City Council Districts Legislations
February 22, 2021

Members of the Senate State Affairs Committee –

As the Government Affairs Director for the City of Boise, I write to share our support on SB 1111, which will enact technical corrections to previously passed legislation (HB 413, 2020) that requires the creation of city council districts for cities over 100,000 people in population.

Upon passage and further review of the requirements in House Bill 413, three main issues became apparent as challenges the City of Boise would need to address in order to successfully implement this new law. In an effort to continue moving implementation forward, the cities of Boise, Meridian and Nampa worked with Senate President Pro Tem Chuck Winder and Brian Kane from the Attorney General's Office to discuss updates to Idaho Code §50-707A. These amendments would address concerns raised by cities regarding 1) the timeframe for the creation of districts, 2) the unclear process for drawing and deciding the districts, and 3) the unclear process for implementing the districts.

Under HB 413, council districts would need to be drawn 120 days before the general election for city council races in November 2021, and then again after the reapportionment process redraws election precinct boundaries in 2022 in order to comply with the initial legislation. This process has already been delayed by the late return of Idaho's U.S. Census data, that won't be delivered to the State of Idaho until the end of July 2021, which would create a very short window for cities to craft new council districts. As proposed under SB 1111, the updated language will time the drawing of the council districts map so that it mirrors the State's reapportionment process, thus preventing cities from needing to draw maps twice within a two-year timeframe.

Now under SB 1111, it will allow for 2021 city council elections to remain via an at-large process for a two-year term and then will transition into council districts for four-year terms in 2023. By aligning the district boundary mapping with the State's reapportionment process, it will also save taxpayer dollars. Expenses for election administration, ordinance passage, legal advice, demographer fees for map

drawing, public education and outreach, etc. are estimated from \$75,000-\$100,000 for one boundary drawing cycle, specifically for the City of Boise.

Additionally, SB 1111 provides additional clarity regarding how cities will move forward in drawing and deciding districts, as well as final implementation concerns. Under the new language, the districts would be drawn by a committee as established by city ordinance. This will provide cities the ability to establish a process that is workable for their respective community. Also, cities will be able to engage their County Clerk to serve as a non-voting ex officio member to assist the committee with regard to precincts, boundaries, and any other districting issues to ensure they are in compliance with state election laws.

The City of Boise sincerely thanks Pro Tem Winder and Rep. Palmer for their partnership in addressing the technical implementation concerns that we raised, and for working alongside the cities to ensure that the intent of HB 413 could be made given our concerns.

For these reasons, we urge your "yes" vote on SB 1111. If you have any questions about our position, please do not hesitate to reach me at kgriesmyer@cityofboise.org or at 208-890-3800. Thank you.



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Creating a city for everyone.