



KING COUNTY

1200 King County Courthouse
516 Third Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104

Signature Report

June 20, 2006

Ordinance 15523

Proposed No. 2006-0191.2

Sponsors Patterson, Ferguson and Phillips

1 AN ORDINANCE authorizing the conduct of vote-by-mail
2 elections and directing the director of the records, elections
3 and licensing services division to conduct all primary,
4 special and general elections in King County entirely by
5 mail ballot beginning on a date in 2007 or in 2008 to be
6 determined by the director only after certain conditions are
7 met.

8
9

10 BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF KING COUNTY:

11 **SECTION 1. Findings:**

12 A. The number of King County voters who vote by absentee ballot currently
13 fluctuates between approximately seventy and eighty percent in any given election.

14 B. In the 2005 primary, 81.73 percent of the ballots cast in King County were
15 cast by mail.

16 C. Nearly sixty percent of all registered voters in King County are currently
17 registered to automatically vote by absentee ballot.

18 D. The current dual system of conducting elections by mail and polls in King
19 County requires five hundred twenty-eight polling locations and close to four thousand
20 poll workers for a countywide election, plus a full scale mail ballot processing operation
21 and facility.

22 E. In 2005, the Washington state Legislature amended Title 29A RCW to allow
23 counties the option of conducting all elections by mail.

24 F. As of April 2006, thirty-four of the thirty-nine counties in Washington state
25 have adopted legislation to authorize all mail voting.

26 G. Conducting all elections in King County by mail will allow the county to
27 focus resources and systems to gain efficiencies and increase security by limiting
28 dependency on human interaction and ballot handling.

29 SECTION 2. The director of the records, elections and licensing services division
30 is directed to conduct all King County elections entirely by mail ballot in accordance with
31 state law beginning on a date in 2007 or in 2008 determined by the director only after the
32 following conditions have been met:

33 A. A new director of records, elections and licensing services and a
34 superintendent of elections have been appointed by the executive and confirmed by the
35 council;

36 B. The director and elections section staff have completed the cultural change
37 and management training recommended by the citizens' election oversight committee and
38 the independent task force on elections; and

39 C. The executive has transmitted and the council has approved by motion a plan
40 with cost estimates for regional voting centers and ballot drop boxes. The plan shall be

41 filed in the form of an original and ten copies with the clerk of the council, who will
42 retain the original and will forward copies to each councilmember and to the lead staff of
43 the committee-of-the-whole.

44 SECTION 3. There shall be an electronic tracking system established for tracking
45 ballots so that voters can, through use of the Internet, follow the movement of their
46 ballots as they move from King County to the voter and back to King County for
47 counting and crediting the voter for voting.

48 SECTION 4. Prior to implementation of vote-by-mail elections, the executive
49 shall transmit to the council a report that identifies the estimated capital and operating
50 cost of regional voting centers and drop boxes, including staffing costs for temporary
51 workers and sheriff deputies that may be needed at regional voting centers and in the
52 transport of ballots, a map identifying the location of regional voting centers and drop
53 boxes and security measures that will be put in place for regional voting centers and drop
54 boxes. Implementation of vote-by-mail shall not occur until the council has approved the
55 report by motion. The report shall be filed in the form of an original and ten copies with
56 the clerk of the council, who will retain the original and will forward copies to each
57 councilmember and to the lead staff of the committee-of-the-whole.

58

Ordinance 15523 was introduced on 5/1/2006 and passed as amended by the
Metropolitan King County Council on 6/19/2006, by the following vote:

Yes: 5 - Mr. Phillips, Mr. Ferguson, Mr. Gossett, Ms. Patterson and Mr.
Constantine
No: 4 - Mr. von Reichbauer, Ms. Lambert, Mr. Dunn and Ms. Hague
Excused: 0

KING COUNTY COUNCIL
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON