

ORDINANCE NO. _____

AMENDING WHATCOM COUNTY CODE CHAPTER 1.08 (INITIATIVE, REFERENDUM AND RECALL) TO INCREASE THE LENGTH OF THE CONCISE DESCRIPTION OF A BALLOT TITLE FROM 30 TO 75 WORDS.

WHEREAS, Whatcom County Initiative and Referendum measures appear on Whatcom County ballots; and

WHEREAS, Whatcom County Code 1.08.070 limits the concise description of the measure to 30 words; and

WHEREAS, RCW 29A.36.071 specifies a word limit of 75 words for the concise description of local government measures, and all measures on Whatcom County ballots have up to 75 words except county initiatives and referenda; and

WHEREAS, it desirable for measures to appear on the ballot in a consistent manner; and

WHEREAS, Whatcom County voters are entitled to ballot titles that clearly explain measures appearing on the ballot, and 30 words is too few to meet that requirement for initiatives and referenda;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED, that County Code section 1.08.070 is hereby amended to provide for 75 words for the concise description of a ballot title for initiatives and referenda, as outlined in Exhibit A to this ordinance.

ADOPTED this ____ day of _____, 2023.

ATTEST:

**WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY,
WASHINGTON**

Dana Brown-Davis, County Clerk

Barry Buchanan, Council Chair

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

() Approved () Denied

Royce Buckingham, Civil Deputy Prosecutor

Satpal Sidhu, County Executive

Date: _____

Exhibit A

1.08.070 Duty of the prosecuting attorney.

Within 10 days after the receipt of an initiative or referendum, the prosecuting attorney, in consultation with the petitioner, shall formulate the ballot title which shall consist of: (A) a statement of the subject of the measure; (B) a concise description of the measure; and (C) a question: "Shall this be enacted into law?" The statement of the subject of the measure must be proposed as a positive statement, be sufficiently broad to reflect the subject, and be sufficiently precise to give notice of the measure's subject matter, and not exceed 10 words. The concise description must contain no more than ~~30~~75 words, be a true and impartial description of the measure's essential contents, clearly identify the proposition to be voted on, and not, to the extent reasonably possible, create prejudice either for or against the measure.