

<i>CLEARANCES</i>	<i>Initial</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Date Received in Council Office</i>	<i>Agenda Date</i>	<i>Assigned to:</i>
<i>Originator:</i>		7/7/2015		7/7/2015	Introduction
<i>Division Head:</i>				7/21/2015	Public Hearing
<i>Dept. Head:</i>	<i>[Signature]</i>	7.7.15			
<i>Prosecutor:</i>					
<i>Purchasing/Budget:</i>					
<i>Executive:</i>					

**TITLE OF DOCUMENT:**  
 Ordinance - amend Charter to require supermajority to propose Charter amendments

**ATTACHMENTS:**

<i>SEPA review required?</i> ( ) Yes ( ) NO	<i>Should Clerk schedule a hearing?</i> ( X ) Yes ( ) NO
<i>SEPA review completed?</i> ( ) Yes ( ) NO	<i>Requested Date:</i> 7/21/2015

**SUMMARY STATEMENT OR LEGAL NOTICE LANGUAGE:** *(If this item is an ordinance or requires a public hearing, you must provide the language for use in the required public notice. Be specific and cite RCW or WCC as appropriate. Be clear in explaining the intent of the action.)*

Ordinance proposing an amendment to the Whatcom County Charter to require a supermajority of either the entire Charter Review Commission or the County Council to propose Charter amendments

**COMMITTEE ACTION:**

**COUNCIL ACTION:**

7/7/2015: Introduced 7-0  
 7/21/2015: Amended and adopted 5-1, Brenner opposed, Mann absent, Ord. 2015-032

NOTE: On 7/28/2015 Executive Louws declined to sign the ordinance

<b>Related County Contract #:</b>	<b>Related File Numbers:</b>	<b>Ordinance or Resolution Number:</b> Ord. 2015-032
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**Please Note:** Once adopted and signed, ordinances and resolutions are available for viewing and printing on the County's website at: [www.co.whatcom.wa.us/council](http://www.co.whatcom.wa.us/council).

**SPONSORED BY: CONSENT**  
**PROPOSED BY: CONSENT**  
**INTRODUCTION DATE: JULY 7, 2015**

**ORDINANCE NO. 2015-032**

**PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO THE WHATCOM COUNTY  
CHARTER TO REQUIRE A SUPERMAJORITY OF EITHER THE  
ENTIRE CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION OR THE COUNTY  
COUNCIL TO PROPOSE CHARTER AMENDMENTS**

**WHEREAS**, the Whatcom County Charter requires the Whatcom County Council to have five affirmative votes in order to propose a Charter amendment to the voters; and

**WHEREAS**, the Whatcom County Charter Review Commission has been granted the authority in the Whatcom County Charter to propose Charter amendments to the voters by filing their proposed amendments with the County Council and having the County Council submit amendments to the voters; and

**WHEREAS**, the Whatcom County Council and the Whatcom County Charter Review Commission should be held to the same standards in public participation and in submitting Charter amendments to the voters; and

**WHEREAS**, achieving a supermajority agreement on proposing Charter amendments requires a greater effort to set aside partisan agendas and achieve bipartisan consensus than a simple majority vote; and

**WHEREAS**, reaching a supermajority agreement means more diverse opinions are heard, included, and considered; and

**WHEREAS**, Charter Review Commission amendments have been proposed with limited or no opportunity for public comment and without broad support, achieving only a simple majority vote; and

**WHEREAS**, elected officials should work together for the good of all the people of Whatcom County.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED** by the Whatcom County Council that the County Auditor place on the November 2015 general election ballot a Charter amendment, as outlined in Exhibit A to this ordinance, requiring a supermajority vote of two-thirds of the entire membership of either the Charter Review Commission or the Whatcom County Council to submit or propose a charter amendment to the voters.

**BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED** that both the Charter Review Commission and the Whatcom County Council shall be held to the same high percentage of votes required in order to propose Charter amendments to the voters and neither body shall be required to achieve a higher or lower threshold than the other for proposing any Charter amendment to the voters.

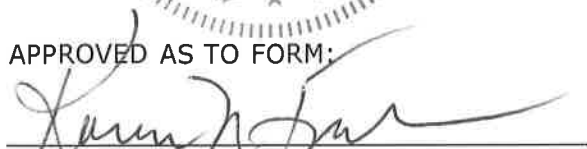
**ADOPTED**, this 21st day of July, 2015.

ATTEST



Dana Brown-Davis, Clerk of the Council

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

  
Civil Deputy Prosecutor

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL  
WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON

  
Carl Weimer, Council Chair

WHATCOM COUNTY EXECUTIVE  
WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON

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Jack Louws, County Executive

( ) Approved ( ) Denied

Date Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\* 7/28/2015: The Executive declined to sign

**Whatcom County Council Charter Amendment, Proposition #10**

As adopted by the Whatcom County Council: Shall all Charter amendments proposed by either the Charter Review Commission or the County Council be required to receive a supermajority vote of the entire membership of the Commission or Council in order to be placed on the ballot for voters to consider?

**Ballot Title:**

**REDUCING PARTISAN AMENDMENTS THROUGH SUPERMAJORITY AGREEMENT**

The Whatcom County Council has proposed an amendment to the Whatcom County Charter concerning equal standards to submit Charter amendments. This measure would amend 8.21 and 8.23 of the Whatcom County Charter to require any amendment proposed by the County Council or the Charter Review Commission to have a supermajority vote of the of the Commission or Council. If passed, this amendment will supersede Ballot Propositions No. 2 and No. 3. Should this proposal be:

**APPROVED\_\_\_\_\_**  
**EJECTED\_\_\_\_\_**

**Amended Charter Language**

**Section 8.21 Amendments by the Charter Review Commission.**

The Commission may propose amendments to the Charter by filing such proposed amendments with the County Council who shall submit the amendment to the voters at the next November general election at least ninety (90) days after the filing and registration of the amendments. A supermajority (ten of fifteen) of affirmative votes of the entire membership shall be required to file a proposed amendment with the County Council.

**Section 8.23 Amendments by the County Council.**

The County Council may propose amendments to the Charter by enacting an ordinance to submit a proposed amendment to the voters at the next November general election occurring at least ninety (90) days after enactment. A supermajority (five of seven) of affirmative votes of the entire membership shall be required to enact such an ordinance. An ordinance proposing an amendment to the Charter shall not be subject to the veto power of the County Executive.

The County Council by unanimous vote of the entire Council may effect amendments to the language of the Charter where the passage of time has rendered language moot or obsolete. Such changes shall be made by ordinance, and have a public hearing. {Amended by referendum 1995}