

# Resolution to expand Port of Bellingham from 3 to 5 commissioners

Whereas, at the Port of Bellingham's September 17, 2024, meeting, [Commissioner Ken Bell proposed](#) that the Port consider placing a measure on the ballot to expand the Commission from three to five members.

Whereas, Port Commissioner Michael Shepard has long supported that idea.

Whereas a similar ballot measure was [very narrowly defeated in 2012](#), 49.19% to 50.81%.

Whereas, under the Open Public Meetings Act, no commissioner may presently speak with any other commissioner outside of Commission meetings, because that would constitute a quorum (two out of three).

Whereas that in effect empowers the unelected administration of the Port relative to the elected Port commissioners, which is undesirable in a democracy.

Whereas, with expansion to five commissioners, it would become possible for any two commissioners to converse with each other, because that would fall short of a quorum.

Whereas this is already the case for county and city council members in Whatcom County.

Therefore, be it resolved, that Whatcom County Democrats asks the Port Commission to place a measure on the ballot asking the public whether it wishes to expand the Port from three to five commissioners.

Therefore, be it further resolved, that we favor adopting the existing five county council districts to elect Port commissioners in the same manner as at present, with primary elections conducted through district-only voting, followed by general elections conducted through countywide voting.

Therefore, be it further resolved, that we recommend holding a special election in early 2025, which, if voters approve, would enable the transition to five districts to begin with the 2025 general election, when two of the existing three terms conclude anyways. It's the most convenient time to initiate a transition.

*Adopted by unanimous vote at the October 26, 2024, General Membership Meeting.*