



Fiscal Note

Legislative Council Staff

Nonpartisan Services for Colorado's Legislature

HB 25-1265: MODIFY COUNTY COMMISSIONER ELECTIONS

Prime Sponsors:

Rep. Marshall
Sen. Liston; Weissman

Fiscal Analyst:

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Bill Outcome: Postponed Indefinitely

Drafting number: LLS 25-0571

Version: Final Fiscal Note

Date: June 13, 2025

Fiscal note status: The final fiscal note reflects the introduced bill. This bill was postponed indefinitely by the House State, Civic, Military, & Veterans Affairs Committee on March 3, 2025; therefore, the impacts identified in this analysis do not take effect.

Summary Information

Overview. The bill would have required counties with populations of 250,000 or more to have five county commissioners and five districts.

Types of impacts. The bill was projected to affect the following areas on an ongoing basis:

- Local Government

Appropriations. No appropriation was required.

Table 1
State Fiscal Impacts

Type of Impact	Budget Year FY 2025-26	Out Year FY 2026-27
State Revenue	\$0	\$0
State Expenditures	\$0	\$0
Transferred Funds	\$0	\$0
Change in TABOR Refunds	\$0	\$0
Change in State FTE	0.0 FTE	0.0 FTE

Summary of Legislation

The bill requires counties with populations of 250,000 or more to have five commissioners and five districts. The bill outlines three methods for electing the five required commissioners, as follows:

- five commissioners voted by residents of five districts;
- three commissioners voted by residents in three districts and two at-large commissioners; or
- five at-large commissioners using proportional ranked voting method.

By January 1, 2032, a board of county commissioners with only three commissioners in a county with a population greater than 250,000 must adopt a resolution to change their membership to five commissioners, and must refer a resolution to voters at the next general election to select a voting scenario to elect future commissioners. The requirements of the bill also apply to counties whose populations grow and exceed 250,000 in the future.

Counties may change the method of electing members of a board of county commissioner via referendum or a petition signed by at least eight percent of voters submitted to the county clerk at least 90 days before the next general election.

Background

Currently, there are eight Colorado counties with a population greater than 250,000 people, not including Denver, which is a consolidated city and county. Of the eight counties, Adams, Arapahoe, El Paso, and Weld counties already have five commissioners. This bill impacts the remaining four counties that only have three commissioners: Boulder, Douglas, Jefferson, Larimer.

Local Government

Workload and costs for Boulder, Douglas, Jefferson, and Larimer counties will increase from adding two more commissioners, holding the required referendum to select the method of electing commissioners, and redistricting to create new commissioner districts. To the extent additional counties reach the 250,000 population threshold on or after January 1, 2032, costs will increase for those counties. It is assumed that counties would implement the changes and seat additional county commissioners no later than FY 2031-32. These impacts are discussed in more detail below.

New Commissioners

When the four counties add two additional commissioners, this will result in costs to each county of \$350,000 or more annually for salaries and benefits for these commissioners. Additional costs for office space, computers, supplies, aides, support staff, and other expenses will also be incurred.

Referendum

Counties may have additional election costs to place the required referendum on a general election ballot by January 2032. It is assumed that counties already have county offices or ballot measures that will require participation in the coordinated election. To the extent this referendum is the sole county measure on the ballot, new costs will be incurred. If other county offices or ballot measures are on the ballot, adding one additional measure may impact the share of coordinated election costs paid by the county. For information purposes, large urban counties in past elections have had cost of around \$700,000 to participate in coordinated elections.

Redistricting

If a county must establish new district boundaries following voter approval of the method for selecting commissioners, costs will increase for additional staff in election divisions, computer hardware, and software with geographic system information (GSI) and mapping capabilities, as well as associated costs to convene a redistricting commission. Costs include expenses for data gathering and analysis, community meetings, and ensuring newly drawn districts are fair; this can range from \$75,000 to \$135,000 per county.

Petition Process

The bill also creates a new countywide petition process that requires county clerks to approve petition formats, receive petitions, and review signatures to verify if the 8 percent threshold is met for future petitions seeking to change the voting method for county commissioners. This process can cost between \$37,500 and \$75,000 per county per ballot measure.

Effective Date

The bill takes effect 90 days following adjournment of the General Assembly sine die, assuming no referendum petition is filed.

State and Local Government Contacts

Counties

Local Affairs

County Clerks

Secretary of State