King County

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Legislation Details (With Text)

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Title:	AN ORDINANCE establishing February 12, 2019, as the date for an advisory measure special election on the question of the amount, if any, of revenues from the applicable lodging tax King County should transfer to the Washington State Major League Baseball Stadium Public Facilities District to help defray the costs of capital improvements to Safeco Field's existing infrastructure and the ballpark's maintenance.		
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Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
9/5/2018	1	Committee of the Whole	Lapsed	
9/4/2018	1	Metropolitan King County Council	Introduced and Referred	

Clerk 09/04/2018

AN ORDINANCE establishing February 12, 2019, as the date for an advisory measure special election on the question of the amount, if any, of revenues from the applicable lodging tax King County should transfer to the Washington State Major League Baseball Stadium Public Facilities District to help defray the costs of capital improvements to Safeco Field's existing infrastructure and the ballpark's maintenance.

STATEMENT OF FACTS:

1. The Washington State Major League Baseball Stadium Public Facilities District ("the PFD") operates the publicly owned Safeco Field ("the ballpark").

2. Since 1967, the King County lodging tax has been used to finance the construction of two professional sports stadiums and an exhibition center.

3. Currently there is a funding agreement proposed between the county and the PFD, whereby the county would transfer a portion of future lodging tax revenues, starting in 2021 and to be coterminous with the PFD leasing the ballpark to the Baseball Club of Seattle, L.L.L.P. ("the Baseball Club"). As proposed, the transferred tax revenues could only be used for capital improvements to the existing infrastructure of the ballpark. The proposed agreement does not authorize public funding on upgrades to the ballpark, such as suites or so-called Club spaces. The proposed agreement further requires that all modernization upgrades, as well as all operation and maintenance expenses be paid for by the Baseball Club during the lease term and any extensions.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF KING COUNTY:

SECTION 1. **Findings:**

A. The presence of a Major League Baseball team in King County provides a substantial public benefit to the residents of the county.

B. A continued investment in the publicly owned Safeco Field ("the ballpark") is necessary to ensure that it remain a source of wholesome, family-centered entertainment and provide a sense of enhanced civic pride as well as a positive impact on the local and regional economy.

C. The ballpark promotes tourism and attracts tourists to the county, with approximately forty-five percent of persons attending Mariners games coming from locations outside of King County.

D. The Washington State Major League Baseball Stadium Public Facilities District ("PFD") and the Baseball Club of Seattle, L.L.L.P. ("the Baseball Club") have entered into a nonbinding term sheet, dated May 23, 2018, wherein the Baseball Club has agreed to lease the ballpark for an initial term of twenty-five years, starting in 2019 and to assume obligations, including financial responsibilities for the operation, maintenance and capital improvements to the ballpark in exchange for the PFD assuming obligations, including financial responsibilities related to capital improvements to the ballpark's existing infrastructure.

E. In accordance with RCW 67.28.180, beginning in 2021, twenty-five percent of the lodging taxes generated every year in King County may be used to fund operating and capital programs that promote tourism and attract tourists or be pledged to finance bonds for capital improvements programs that promote tourism and attract tourists.

F. The county is already committed to use a portion of these lodging tax revenues to pay debt service on the Building for Culture Program bonds, beginning in 2021. The remaining revenues may fund new operating and capital programs that promote tourism and attract tourists.

G. Pursuant to chapter 29A.04 RCW, the county council deems that the question of whether a portion of the lodging taxes generated every year in King County that may be used to fund operating and capital programs that promote tourism and attract tourists should be transferred to the PFD to help defray the costs of capital improvements to the ballpark's existing infrastructure should be placed before the voters on February 12, 2019, as an advisory measure.

H. K.C.C. chapter 1.10 provides for the publication and distribution of local voters' pamphlets in conformity with the provisions of chapter 29A.32 RCW for elections held in King County.

SECTION 2. A special election shall be held on February 12, 2019, in accordance with chapter 29A.04 RCW, for the purpose of submitting the advisory measure in section 3 of this ordinance.

SECTION 3. In accordance with chapter 29A.04 RCW, it is hereby deemed that an advisory measure should be submitted to the voters of the county at a special election to be held on February 12, 2019, to wit: if King County were to transfer to the Washington State Major League Baseball Stadium Public Facilities District a portion of the lodging tax to pay for capital improvements to the ballpark's existing infrastructure and maintenance at the ballpark, how much should be transferred; and giving the voters dollar level from which to choose. The King County elections department director is hereby requested to assume jurisdiction to call and conduct a special election and submit to the registered voters of the county the proposition as set forth in section 3 of this ordinance. The clerk of the council is hereby authorized and directed to transmit this

proposition to the elections department director, with such additions, deletions or modifications in the ballot title as may be required for the proposition listed below by the King County prosecutor:

Proposition: The King County Council passed Ordinance concerning this advisory measure on the use of lodging tax revenues. How much, if any, of the lodging tax should King County allocate and transfer to the Washington State Major League Baseball Stadium Public Facilities District:

A. $0;

B. $25 million; or

C. $185 million to $250 million.

SECTION 4. The elections department director is hereby authorized and requested to prepare and distribute a local voters' pamphlet, pursuant to K.C.C. 1.10.010, for the special election called for in this ordinance, the cost of the pamphlet to be included as part of the cost of the special election.