
THIRD READING

Bill No: AB 2568
Author: Johnson (R)
Amended: 4/27/26 in Assembly
Vote: 21

SENATE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE: 6-0, 6/17/26

AYES: Durazo, Choi, Arreguín, Cervantes, Laird, Seyarto

NO VOTE RECORDED: Ashby

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 70-0, 5/11/26 - See last page for vote

SUBJECT: Water district directors: compensation

SOURCE: West Valley Water District

DIGEST: Authorizes, until January 1, 2032, certain water districts to compensate board members for up to 15 days a month.

ANALYSIS:

Existing law:

- 1) Specifies that, notwithstanding any other provision of law, the governing board of any water district may, by ordinance, provide compensation to members of the governing board, unless any compensation is prohibited by its principal act, in an amount not to exceed \$100 per day for each day's attendance at meetings of the board, or for each day's service rendered as a member of the board by request of the board, and may, by ordinance, increase the compensation received by members of the governing board above the amount of \$100 per day, as specified
- 2) Provides that the determination of whether a director's activities on any specific day are compensable shall be made pursuant to existing law
- 3) Specifies that in any ordinance adopted to increase the amount of compensation which may be received by members of the governing board of a water district

above the amount of \$100 per day, the increase may not exceed an amount equal to 5%, for each calendar year following the operative date of the last adjustment, of the compensation which is received when the ordinance is adopted. No ordinance adopted pursuant to this chapter shall authorize compensation for more than a total of 10 days in any calendar month

- 4) Provides that any water district described in 5), below, is authorized to adopt ordinances pursuant to this chapter. No ordinance shall be adopted except following a public hearing. Notice of the hearing shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation, as specified
- 5) Defines for the purposes of 1) through 4), above, “water district” to mean any district or other political subdivision, other than a city or county, a primary function of which is the irrigation, reclamation, or drainage of land or the diversion, storage, management, or distribution of water primarily for domestic, municipal, agricultural, industrial, recreation, fish and wildlife enhancement, flood control, or power production purposes. “Water districts” include, but are not limited to, irrigation districts, county water districts, California water districts, water storage districts, reclamation districts, county waterworks districts, drainage districts, water replenishment districts, levee districts, municipal water districts, water conservation districts, community services districts, water management districts, flood control districts, flood control and floodwater conservation districts, flood control and water conservation districts, water management agencies, water agencies, and specified public utility districts

This bill:

- 1) Authorizes specified water districts that have at least 90,000 residents within their jurisdiction to allow for board members to be compensated for up to a total of 15 days in any calendar month.
- 2) Provides that, if a water district compensates its members for more than 10 days in a calendar month, the members of the governing board of the water district shall annually adopt a written policy describing, based on a finding supported by substantial evidence, why providing compensation for more than 10 days per calendar month is necessary for the effective operation of the water district.
- 3) Specifies that the above provisions shall remain in effect only until January 1, 2032, and as of that date are repealed.

Background

Board member meetings. A local agency may compensate members of its legislative body for attending specified events (AB 1234, Salinas, Chapter 700, Statutes of 2005):

- a) A meeting of the legislative body;
- b) A meeting of an advisory body;
- c) A conference or educational activity that complies with the Brown Act, including ethics training; and
- d) Other events, but only if the governing body has adopted a written policy specifying those other occasions.

Districts that are allowed to provide compensation are usually limited to doing so for a maximum number of meetings per calendar month. Most special districts that perform some type of water service, whether it be flood control, drinking water, or irrigation, can compensate their board members up to \$100 per day for a maximum of 10 days per calendar month. In addition, many, but not all, districts may also increase the daily rate for attending meetings by five percent per year by annually adopting an ordinance that provides for such an increase.

Many special districts can also reimburse the members of their legislative bodies for their actual and necessary expenses to attend meetings. Local officials must fill out expense reports and provide receipts to receive reimbursement. At their next regular meeting after the meeting for which reimbursement was provided, officials must also give brief reports about the meetings they attended at the agency's expense.

In 2018, the Legislature allowed one water district, Santa Clara Valley Water District (SCVWD), to compensate its board members up to 15 days per month until December 31, 2023 (AB 1889, Caballero, Chapter 251, Statutes of 2018). The Legislature later repealed the sunset date in 2023 to allow SCVWD to indefinitely compensate its members 15 meeting days a month (AB 939, Pellerin, Chapter 170, Statutes of 2023).

West Valley Water District. The West Valley Water District (WVWD) serves residents primarily in San Bernardino County with a small service area extending into Riverside County. First formed as the West San Bernardino County Water District in 1952, the district now operates five treatment plants, 360 miles of pipeline, 25 reservoirs, 17 wells, and serves roughly 20,000 service connections, providing drinking water to 100,000 residents. WVWD's five-member board of directors governs the district, with voters electing directors to four-year terms.

WVWD's board approved a policy that allows for a variety of meetings, events, and conferences to be eligible for compensation. This includes regular board meetings, conferences, community meetings, and any other activity the board preapproves. Currently, WVWD board of directors receive compensation for up to 10 days per month like other water districts. Although state law sets the base stipend at \$100 per meeting, the WVWD board has frequently exercised its ability to increase that rate by 5% annually, putting the current stipend amount at \$227 per meeting, for a total of \$27,240 per year.

Comments

According to the author, "AB 2568 updates the outdated statutory cap on water board member compensation to reflect the complex regulatory and operational realities modern water districts face. By providing permissive authority to increase the monthly meeting cap from 10 to 15 days, this bill ensures directors are fairly compensated for the actual time required for essential governance and regional coordination."

Raise your glass. Local agencies compensate their board members for the time and expenses associated with serving on behalf of the district. This compensation generally takes the form of a per-meeting payment, up to a maximum number of meetings per year. Limiting the number of meetings for which a public agency can compensate its members with taxpayer funds builds in a safeguard by ensuring that board members don't claim more compensation than they need to perform their duties. AB 2568 relaxes this limitation by increasing the number of meetings for which board members may be compensated, potentially eroding the public's trust in the motivations of their elected officials. By expanding the number of days board members get compensated, it may create an incentive for board members to schedule meetings across different days in order to increase their compensation, regardless of whether those meetings are necessary. Although board compensation is intended to support effective governance and facilitate participation in district oversight, questions from the public may arise as to whether the proposed increased in compensated days is necessary to achieve those objectives.

FISCAL EFFECT: Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: No Local: No

SUPPORT: (Verified 6/18/26)

West Valley Water District (Source)
Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA)
California Special Districts Association

Desert Water Agency
Water Replenishment District

OPPOSITION: (Verified 6/18/26)

None received

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 70-0, 5/11/26

AYES: Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alanis, Alvarez, Ávila Farías, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Bryan, Calderon, Caloza, Carrillo, Castillo, Chen, Connolly, Davies, Dixon, Elhawary, Ellis, Flora, Fong, Gabriel, Gallagher, Garcia, Gipson, Jeff Gonzalez, Mark González, Hadwick, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Irwin, Jackson, Johnson, Kalra, Krell, Lackey, Macedo, Muratsuchi, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Patterson, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Ramos, Ransom, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Sanchez, Schiavo, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Stefani, Ta, Tangipa, Valencia, Wallis, Ward, Wicks, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas

NO VOTE RECORDED: Arambula, DeMaio, Lee, Lowenthal, McKinnor, Quirk-Silva, Celeste Rodriguez, Michelle Rodriguez, Solache, Soria

Prepared by: Itzel Vargas / L. GOV. / (916) 651-4119
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