



SENATE BILL 269: Washington-Warren Airport Authority.

2021-2022 General Assembly

Committee:		Date:	June 30, 2022
Introduced by:	Sens. Murdock, Woodard	Prepared by:	Erika Churchill
Analysis of:	Fourth Edition		Staff Attorney

OVERVIEW: *The bill would establish the Washington-Warren Airport Authority in the Beaufort County.*

[As introduced, this bill was identical to H387, as introduced by Reps. Hawkins, Alston, Reives, which is currently in Senate Rules and Operations of the Senate.]

CURRENT LAW: Current statewide statutory authority allows for cities to operate an airport as follows:

- [Article 16](#) of Chapter 160A of the General Statutes. – Authorizes a city to operate an airport as a public enterprise.
- [Article 20](#) of Chapter 160A of the General Statutes. – Authorizes interlocal agreements between units of local government to jointly operate any public enterprise and enables those units to negotiate the terms of the agreement consistent certain statutory requirements.
- [Article 1](#) of Chapter 63 of the General Statutes. – Authorizes a city, singularly or with other cities or counties, to operate an airport inside or outside of its corporate limits and [Article 6](#) of Chapter 63 authorizes the city to vest authority in a board to operate the airport and prescribe the powers and duties of that board.
- [Article 8](#) of Chapter 63 of the General Statutes. – Authorizes two or more units of local government to create a special airport district which is public body politic and corporate run by a board having powers and authority similar to a city or county, including the power to issue bonds and to levy and collect taxes within the district.

None of these statutes provide an option for a city to establish an independent entity to own and operate an airport. The current statutes would allow a city to establish an airport with another willing local government partner. The structure of any such partnership would vary depending upon which statutory provision was utilized to establish the airport authority, ranging from an airport operation based upon the terms negotiated in an interlocal agreement to an airport operation run by an independent body politic in a special airport district.

Currently the City of Washington owns and operates an airport, known as the Washington-Warren Airport (KOCW). The City has established a seven member advisory board, with one of those members serving emeritus.

BILL ANALYSIS: The bill would establish the Washington-Warren Airport Authority (Airport Authority), a body corporate and politic, to own and operate the airport, governed by a 7 member board. The City of Washington would appoint all members to the board, each serving three-year staggered terms

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and able to serve one or more successive terms. The current advisory board would be appointed initially, plus one additional member.

The Airport Authority would be a unit of local government, subject to the Local Government Budget and Fiscal Control Act, able to sue and be sued in their own right, to serve a public purpose. The City of Washington could provide land, property, and appropriations of money to the Airport Authority.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Effective when it becomes law.