

Chapter 39.96 RCW
PAYMENT AGREEMENTS

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RCW 39.96.010 Findings and declaration. The legislature finds and declares that the issuance by state and local governments of bonds and other obligations involves exposure to changes in interest rates; that a number of financial instruments are available to lower the net cost of these borrowings, or to reduce the exposure of state and local governments to changes in interest rates; that these reduced costs for state and local governments will benefit taxpayers and ratepayers; and that the legislature desires to provide state and local governments with express statutory authority to take advantage of these instruments. In recognition of the complexity of these financial instruments, the legislature desires that this authority be subject to certain limitations. [2004 c 108 § 1; 2000 c 184 § 1; 1995 c 192 § 1; 1993 c 273 § 1.]

Effective date—2000 c 184: "This act takes effect July 1, 2000." [2000 c 184 § 7.]

Effective date—1995 c 192: "This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and shall take effect July 1, 1995." [1995 c 192 § 3.]

RCW 39.96.020 Definitions. The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(1) "Financial advisor" means a financial services or financial advisory firm:

(a) With recognized knowledge and experience in connection with the negotiation and execution of payment agreements;

(b) That is acting solely as financial advisor to the governmental entity in connection with the execution of the payment agreement and the issuance or incurring of any related obligations, and not as a principal, placement agent, purchaser, underwriter, or other similar party, and that does not control, nor is it controlled by or under common control with, any such party;

(c) That is compensated for its services in connection with the execution of payment agreements, either directly or indirectly, solely by the governmental entity; and

(d) Whose compensation is not based on a percentage of the notional amount of the payment agreement or of the principal amount of any related obligations.

(2) "Governmental entity" means state government or local government.

(3) "Local government" means any city, county, city transportation authority, regional transit authority established under chapter 81.112 RCW, port district, public hospital district, public facilities district, or public utility district, or any joint operating agency formed under RCW 43.52.360, that has or will have outstanding obligations in an aggregate principal amount of at least one hundred million dollars as of the date a payment agreement is executed or is scheduled by its terms to commence or had at least one hundred million dollars in gross revenues during the preceding calendar year.

(4) "Obligations" means bonds, notes, bond anticipation notes, commercial paper, or other obligations for borrowed money, or lease, installment purchase, or other similar financing agreements or certificates of participation in such agreements.

(5) "Payment agreement" means a written agreement which provides for an exchange of payments based on interest rates, or for ceilings or floors on these payments, or an option on these payments, or any combination, entered into on either a current or forward basis.

(6) "State government" means (a) the state of Washington, acting by and through its state finance committee, (b) the Washington health care facilities authority, (c) the Washington higher education facilities authority, (d) the Washington state housing finance commission, or (e) the state finance committee upon adoption of a resolution approving a payment agreement on behalf of any state institution of higher education as defined under RCW 28B.10.016: PROVIDED, That such approval shall not constitute the pledge of the full faith and credit of the state, but a pledge of only those funds specified in the approved agreement. [2005 c 154 § 1; 2004 c 108 § 2; 2003 c 47 § 1; 1993 c 273 § 2.]

RCW 39.96.030 Payment agreements authorized—Conditions. (1)

Subject to subsections (2) and (3) of this section, any governmental entity may enter into a payment agreement in connection with, or incidental to, the issuance, incurring, or carrying of specific obligations, for the purpose of managing or reducing the governmental entity's exposure to fluctuations or levels of interest rates. No governmental entity may carry on a business of acting as a dealer in payment agreements. Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to provide governmental entities with separate or additional authority to invest funds or moneys relating to or held in connection with any obligations.

(2) No governmental entity may enter into a payment agreement under this chapter unless it first:

(a) Finds and determines, by ordinance or resolution, that the payment agreement, if fully performed by all parties thereto, will (i) reduce the amount or duration of its exposure to changes in interest rates; or (ii) result in a lower net cost of borrowing with respect to the related obligations;

(b) Obtains, on or prior to the date of execution of the payment agreement, a written certification from a financial advisor that (i)

the terms and conditions of the payment agreement and any ancillary agreements, including without limitation, the interest rate or rates and any other amounts payable thereunder, are commercially reasonable in light of then existing market conditions; and (ii) the finding and determination contained in the ordinance or resolution required by (a) of this subsection is reasonable.

(3) Prior to selecting the other party to a payment agreement, a governmental entity shall solicit and give due consideration to proposals from at least two entities that meet the criteria set forth in RCW 39.96.040(2). Such solicitation and consideration shall be conducted in such manner as the governmental entity shall determine is reasonable. [2000 c 184 § 2; 1993 c 273 § 3.]

Effective date—2000 c 184: See note following RCW 39.96.010.

RCW 39.96.040 Terms and conditions. (1) Subject to subsections (2), (3), and (4) of this section, payment agreements entered into by any governmental entity may include those payment, term, security, default, remedy, termination, and other terms and conditions, and may be with those parties, as the governmental entity deems reasonably necessary or desirable.

(2) No governmental entity may enter into a payment agreement under this chapter unless:

(a) The other party to the agreement has a rating from at least two nationally recognized credit rating agencies, as of the date of execution of the agreement, that is within the two highest long-term investment grade rating categories, without regard to subcategories, or the payment obligations of the party under the agreement are unconditionally guaranteed by an entity that then has the required ratings; or

(b) (i) The other party to the agreement has a rating from at least two nationally recognized credit rating agencies, as of the date of execution of the agreement, that is within the three highest long-term investment grade rating categories, without regard to subcategories, or the payment obligations of the party under the agreement are unconditionally guaranteed by an entity that has the required ratings; and

(ii) The payment obligations of the other party under the agreement are collateralized by direct obligations of, or obligations the principal and interest on which are guaranteed by, the United States of America, that (A) are deposited with the governmental entity or an agent of the governmental entity; and (B) maintain a market value of not less than one hundred two percent of the net market value of the payment agreement to the governmental entity, as such net market value may be defined and determined from time to time under the terms of the payment agreement.

(3) No governmental entity may enter into a payment agreement with a party who qualifies under subsection (2)(a) of this section unless the payment agreement provides that, in the event the credit rating of the other party or its guarantor falls below the level required by subsection (2)(a) of this section, such party will comply with the collateralization requirements contained in subsection (2)(b) of this section.

(4) No governmental entity may enter into a payment agreement unless:

(a) The notional amount of the payment agreement does not exceed the principal amount of the obligations with respect to which the payment agreement is made; and

(b) The term of the payment agreement does not exceed the final term of the obligations with respect to which the payment agreement is made. [1993 c 273 § 4.]

RCW 39.96.050 Payments—Credit enhancements. (1) Subject to any covenants or agreements applicable to the obligations issued or incurred by the governmental entity, any payments required to be made by the governmental entity under a payment agreement entered into in connection with the issuance, incurring, or carrying of those obligations may be made from money set aside or pledged to pay or secure the payment of those obligations or from any other legally available source.

(2) Any governmental entity may enter into credit enhancement, liquidity, line of credit, or other similar agreements in connection with, or incidental to, the execution of a payment agreement. The credit enhancement, liquidity, line of credit, or other similar agreement may include those payment, term, security, default, remedy, termination, and other terms and conditions, and may be with those parties, as the governmental entity deems reasonably necessary or desirable. [1993 c 273 § 5.]

RCW 39.96.060 Calculations regarding payment of obligations—Status of payments. (1) Subject to any covenants or agreements applicable to the obligations issued or incurred by the governmental entity, if the governmental entity enters into a payment agreement with respect to those obligations, then it may elect to treat the amounts payable from time to time with respect to those obligations as the amounts payable after giving effect to the payment agreement for the purposes of calculating:

(a) Rates and charges to be imposed by a revenue-producing enterprise if the revenues are pledged or used to pay those obligations;

(b) Any taxes to be levied and collected to pay those obligation[s]; and

(c) Payments or debt service on those obligations for any other purpose.

(2) A payment agreement and any obligation of the governmental entity to make payments under the agreement in future fiscal years shall not constitute debt or indebtedness of the governmental entity for purposes of state constitutional and statutory debt limitation provisions if the obligation to make any payments is contingent upon the performance of the other party or parties to the agreement, and no moneys are paid to the governmental entity under the payment agreement that must be repaid in future fiscal years. [1993 c 273 § 6.]

RCW 39.96.080 Authority cumulative. The powers conferred by this chapter are in addition to, and not in substitution for, the powers conferred by any existing law, and the limitations imposed by this chapter do not directly or indirectly modify, limit, or affect the powers conferred by any existing law. [1993 c 273 § 8.]

RCW 39.96.900 Liberal construction—1993 c 273. This chapter shall be liberally construed to effect its purposes. [1993 c 273 § 9.]

RCW 39.96.903 Effective date—1993 c 273. This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and shall take effect immediately [May 7, 1993]. [1993 c 273 § 13.]