

PETITION VS. REFERENDUM

The elector assent methods being considered when a proposal is brought forward to the community for a decision are a referendum (commonly referred to as a “vote”) or a petition. This handout provides an overview of each method along with a comparison between the two.

Referendum Overview

Persons who meet the following qualifications are entitled to vote at a referendum:

- 18 years of age or older on general voting day;
- Canadian citizen;
- Resident of BC for at least 6 months immediately before the day of registration (this eliminates the property owners from out of Province);
- Resident of or registered owner of real property (land) in the service area for at least 30 days immediately before the day of registration (this allows tenants to vote);
- Not disqualified under the Local Government Act or any other enactment from voting in an election and not otherwise disqualified by law; and,
- In the case of non-resident property electors (those who live elsewhere in BC but own property in the service area), if there is more than one individual who is the registered owner of the property, only one of those individuals may register as a non-resident property elector. The person registering must do so with the written consent of the majority of owners.

Corporations are not permitted to vote.

For a referendum to be successful, the majority of the people who cast ballots must vote “yes”.

Petition Process Overview

In a petition process, the RDEK prepares a formal petition and circulates it to all property owners in the service area.

The petition form would describe the proposal, define the boundaries of the service area (if required), indicate the amount to be borrowed, indicate the proposed method of recovering the annual debt costs, and include the names of the property owners and legal description of the property.

All property owners, including corporations and those from out of province, but excluding tenants, within the service area are entitled to sign the petition. If a person owns more than one piece of property and the properties are taxed on separate tax notices, then that person would be able to sign for each of the properties.

Where 2 or more persons own a parcel of land, they are considered as one owner only and the petition is not counted unless a majority of them concur. For example, if 2 people are registered owners of a property they both have to sign the petition for the property to be counted, or if 5 people own a property then 3 have to sign, etc.

To be determined sufficient, the petition must be signed by the owners of at least 1/2 of the parcels of land that will be charged for the service. The total value of those parcels must represent at least 1/2 of the net taxable value of all land and improvements in the service area.








*See Page 6 for a
comparison*

REFERENDUM VS. PETITION:

A COMPARISON

The table below shows a side-by-side comparison of referendums and petitions and illustrates some of the key differences between the two.

	Referendum	Petition
What if I support the proposal?	<p>Qualified electors mark "yes" to the question on the ballot.</p> 	<p>To be counted, a petition form must be signed by the majority of the owners of that property and returned to the RDEK before the deadline.</p> 
What if I oppose the proposal?	<p>Qualified electors mark "no" to the question on the ballot.</p> 	<p>Do not return the petition form. If a petition form is not returned to the RDEK, the property owner is considered to be opposed to the proposal.</p> 
What if I don't participate?	<p>If a ballot is not cast or is not valid, it does not influence the results.</p>	<p>If a property owner is not engaged or does not return the petition form for any reason, the property owner is considered to be opposed to the proposal.</p> 
How are the results counted?	<p>Ballots are counted to determine what percentage of electors support the proposal.</p> <p>To be successful, the majority of valid ballots cast must be in the affirmative.</p>	<p>Each property counts once in a petition.</p> <p>To be successful (sufficient), properly signed petition forms representing the majority of both the number of properties and the assessed value must be returned. (see overview for details)</p>
What is the timeline?	<p>Voting is only available on certain days at specific locations and by mail ballot for those electors unable to attend a voting location due to disability, illness or injury and those who expect to be absent from the RDEK on all voting days.</p>	<p>Petitions must be received by the RDEK by the deadline, which usually allows property owners 4 - 6 weeks to respond.</p>
Who can participate?	<p>All residents who meet the elector qualifications may vote.</p> <p>Only one property owner who lives elsewhere in BC may register as a non-resident property elector and vote.</p> <p>Property owners who live outside of BC do not qualify as electors and cannot vote. This is outlined in Provincial legislation.</p> <p>Corporations are not eligible to vote.</p>	<p>Only property owners may sign a petition.</p> <p>Corporations are eligible to submit a petition.</p>