

HOUSE BILL ANALYSIS

HB 1517

- Title:** Relating to counties that choose not to plan under the growth management act.
- Brief Description:** Allows any county with a population under 100,000, at any time, to opt out of the requirements of adopting comprehensive land use plans and development regulations under the Growth Management Act.
- Sponsors:** Representatives DeBolt, Mulliken, Sump, Mielke, Boldt, Cairnes, Sheahan, Robertson, McMorris, Dunn, Benson and Clements
- Hearing Date:** February 5, 1997

Background:

The Growth Management Act (GMA) establishes requirements for all counties and cities in the state, and imposes additional requirements for counties and cities that are required to plan under all the GMA requirements. All counties and cities are required to designate and protect critical areas and designate natural resource lands. Counties and cities which are required to plan under all GMA requirements must, among other things, adopt a comprehensive plan consistent with a countywide planning policy and adopt development regulations consistent with its comprehensive plan.

A county is required to plan under all GMA requirements if the county meets either of two sets of population and 10-year growth criteria, as determined by the Office of Financial Management (OFM):

- The county has a population of 50,000 or more and the county's population increased by at least 17 percent in the past 10 years. Legislation enacted in 1995 increased the minimum 10-year rate of growth from 10 to 17 percent and applied this change prospectively.
- The county has a population of less than 50,000 and the county's population increased by at least 20 percent in the past 10 years.

In addition, a county not covered by these criteria may adopt a resolution bringing the county under the planning requirements. A city follows the lead of the county in which it is located.

A one-time window allows some counties to opt out of the GMA requirements. For counties with a population of less than 50,000 which were initially required to plan under all GMA requirements, the county legislative authority had until December 31, 1990 to remove the county and cities in the county from the requirements. Counties with a population of 50,000 or less which are later found by OFM to meet the requisite 10-year growth factor have 60 days from the date OFM certifies that it meets the criteria to opt out. Skamania County exercised this option in 1995 and opted not to plan under all GMA requirements.

Summary of Bill:

Any county, with a population under 100,000 may, at any time, remove the county and the cities within the county from the requirements of adopting comprehensive land use plans and development regulations under the GMA.

The removal takes effect when the resolution is filed with the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.