

House Bill Analysis

HB 2082

Title: An act relating to defining rural lands for growth management purposes.
Brief Description: Provides a new definition of rural lands in the growth management act.

Sponsors: Representatives Parlette, Reams, Alexander, Sump, Mastin, Zellinsky, Chandler and Mulliken

Hearing Date: February 28, 1997

Background:

Under the Growth Management Act (GMA), each county and each city in counties that meet the GMA's requirements adopts a comprehensive plan that includes a list of elements and subjects set forth in the statute. Counties and cities must include the following elements and subjects in a comprehensive plan: land use, housing, capital facilities plan, utilities, transportation, provisions designating the five types of critical areas, provisions designating the three types of natural resource lands, the goals and policies of the county's or city's shoreline master program adopted under the Shoreline Management Act, urban growth area designation, and *rural element* designation. A comprehensive plan also may include other elements and matters.

Counties and cities must also adopt *development regulations* consistent with their comprehensive plan and must designate and protect critical areas, designate and conserve certain natural resource lands, and designate urban growth areas.

The GMA defines rural— only in terms of what rural is *not*. The GMA requires counties to include a rural element,— which are lands that are *not* designated for urban growth, agriculture, forest, or mineral resources. The rural element must allow appropriate— land uses that are compatible with the rural character— and provide for a variety of rural densities and uses. The rural element may provide for clustering, density transfer, design guidelines, conservation easements, and other techniques that will accommodate appropriate rural uses not characterized by urban growth.

Summary of Bill:

Under a new definition of rural lands, the individual county legislative authorities determine what constitutes rural lands in their respective counties. The legislative authority

must consider the history, customs, needs, and conditions of the county and must develop written criteria and guidelines for what constitutes rural lands in any county. These criteria may be changed from time to time as conditions and needs change and may include a bright line– test that references minimum lot sizes for the different zones.

Under the new definition, the county legislative authority determines which lands are nonurban in character. Rural lands cannot be designated inside urban growth boundaries.

Fiscal Note: None requested.