

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5057

As of February 3, 1997

Title: An act relating to growth management.

Brief Description: Authorizing a county to exempt itself from the growth management act by resolution.

Sponsors: Senators McCaslin, Sellar, Deccio, Hale, Anderson, Zarelli and Roach.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Government Operations: 2/4/97.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Staff: Kathleen Healy (786-7403)

Background: The Growth Management Act (GMA) was enacted in 1990 and 1991, establishing a variety of requirements for counties and cities. A few requirements are established for all counties and cities, and additional requirements are established for those counties and cities that are required to plan under all GMA requirements.

Two sets of populations and growth factors are established to determine whether a county, and the cities within such a county, are required to plan under all GMA requirements.

Each county planning under all GMA requirements, in cooperation with the cities located within its boundaries, develops a countywide planning policy to guide the comprehensive plans that the county and those cities develop. Counties are recognized as being regional governments. Cities are recognized as the primary providers of urban government services with urban growth areas.

Among other requirements, a county planning under all GMA requirements must designate urban growth areas within the county inside of which urban growth must occur and outside of which urban growth must not occur. Every city must be included within an urban growth area. Other areas may be included in an urban growth area if they are already characterized by urban growth or are adjacent to such areas. The county uses a 20-year population forecast prepared by the Office of Financial Management (OFM) as the basis for designating its urban growth areas.

A county planning under all GMA requirements must adopt a comprehensive plan with a rural element that includes lands not located within an urban growth area and which have not been designated for agriculture, forest, or mineral resources. The rural element must permit land uses compatible with the rural character of these lands and must provide for a variety of densities.

Every county and city in the state is required to designate agricultural lands with long-term commercial significance for agriculture, forest lands with long-term commercial production of timber, and mineral resource lands with long-term significance for mineral extraction. Counties and cities planning under all GMA requirements are required to adopt development regulations assuring the protection of each of these types of designated lands.

Three separate growth management hearings boards, covering different geographic areas, are established to hear appeals on challenges that actions of counties and cities are not in compliance with the GMA.

A county may opt out of the requirement to plan under all GMA requirements if it meets certain population requirements and files a resolution within 60 days after the OFM certifies that a county meets the appropriate criteria. The resolution must be filed with the Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development (CTED), and must indicate the county's intention to remove itself, and the cities located in the county, from GMA requirements. A county not meeting the population criteria may choose to adopt a resolution establishing its intent to plan under the GMA. If such a resolution is adopted, the county, and cities in the county, are subject to all the GMA requirements.

Summary of Bill: Any county may adopt a resolution removing the county, and the cities in the county, from the requirement to plan under GMA provisions which are not of general application to all counties.

If a county chooses to opt out, it loses its ability to collect any fees or taxes which are based on its participation in the planning under GMA provisions. The county's ability to collect such fees or taxes terminates at the end of the calendar year in which the resolution is adopted. Any unexpended funds received locally or through the state for planning under the GMA are placed into the county general fund.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.