

VETO MESSAGE ON HB 2542

April 2, 1998

To the Honorable Speaker and Members,

The House of Representatives of the State of Washington  
Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am returning herewith, without my approval, House Bill No. 2542 entitled:

"AN ACT Relating to allowing rural counties to remove themselves and their cities from the planning requirements of the growth management act;"

HB 2542 would allow any county with a population less than 50,000 « and that either opted into the requirements of the Growth Management Act (GMA), or originally had the opportunity to opt out of GMA « a new opportunity to remove itself and its cities from the requirements to plan under GMA.

We have seen great progress in counties that are planning under the GMA. Many of the counties who would be eligible to opt out under this bill have experienced rapid growth. Even in small rural counties, residents are concerned about growth and the loss of rural areas, and want to preserve the quality of life that attracted them to those areas in the first place. The GMA allows our communities to plan for good and efficient economic growth while preserving our state's spectacular natural features.

This bill would go too far. It would allow some counties that have experienced rapid growth to opt out. In fact, with the exception of two counties, all of the counties that opted in would have been required to plan under the GMA anyway, as a result of their 10-year population growth factors being higher than 20%. This bill would also allow counties to opt out over the objections of their cities. Even in those counties that opted in, cities have invested tremendous amounts of time and money, and have made land use and capital decisions based on GMA. Cities must have a role in the counties' decision to opt out.

For these reasons, I have vetoed House Bill No. 2542 in its entirety.

Respectfully submitted,  
Gary Locke  
Governor