

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2175

As Reported By House Committee On:
Local Government

Title: An act relating to studying the costs related to growth management.

Brief Description: Ordering a study of the costs to local governments related to growth management.

Sponsors: Representatives Mulliken, Scott, Cairnes, Doumit, Sump, Koster, Edwards, Schoesler, Mielke, Fortunato, Ericksen, Dunn, Schindler and Kessler.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Local Government: 2/22/99, 3/1/99 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development to conduct a study of the costs to local governments associated with implementing the Growth Management Act.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 8 members: Representatives Mulliken, Republican Co-Chair; Scott, Democratic Co-Chair; Doumit, Democratic Vice Chair; Mielke, Republican Vice Chair; Edwards; Ericksen; Fisher and Fortunato.

Staff: Caroleen Dineen (786-7156).

Background:

The Growth Management Act (GMA) requires a county and its cities to plan if the county:

- has a population of 50,000 or more and had its population increase by at least 17 percent in the past 10 years; or

- has a population of fewer than 50,000 and had its population increase by at least 20 percent in the past 10 years (unless the county adopted or adopts a resolution removing itself from this requirement within the specified time period).

The population and 10-year growth criteria are determined by the Office of Financial Management (OFM). Counties not meeting these criteria may choose to plan under the GMA.

The GMA requires all counties and cities in the state to designate and protect critical areas and to designate natural resource lands. The GMA imposes additional requirements on counties and cities planning under RCW 36.70A.040 (GMA jurisdictions), including:

- identification and protection of critical areas;
- identification and conservation of agricultural, forest, and mineral resource lands;
- adoption of county-wide planning policies;
- designation of urban growth areas;
- adoption of comprehensive plans with specified required and optional elements; and
- adoption of development regulations implementing the comprehensive plans.

Generally, a GMA jurisdiction is required to adopt a comprehensive plan and implementing development regulations consistent with GMA requirements within four years of the date the GMA jurisdiction became required or chose to plan under RCW 36.70A.040. By September 1, 2002, and every five years thereafter, GMA jurisdictions must review their comprehensive plans and development regulations for consistency with GMA requirements and revise their plans and regulations if necessary.

GMA comprehensive plans and development regulations are presumed valid upon adoption but may be appealed to one of three regional Growth Management Hearings Boards (Boards). The Boards have authority to determine compliance with GMA requirements. The Boards' decisions may be appealed to superior courts.

The GMA also requires six western Washington counties (Snohomish, King, Pierce, Kitsap, Thurston, and Clark) and their cities to establish a monitoring and evaluation program to determine whether their county-wide planning policies are meeting planned residential densities and uses. This evaluation must be conducted every five years. If the evaluation shows that the densities are not being met, the county and its cities must take measures to increase consistency between what was envisioned and what has occurred.

Summary of Bill:

Legislative intent recognizes that local governments have experienced planning, implementation, litigation and other costs as a result of implementing GMA requirements.

The Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development (CTED) is required to conduct a study of the costs associated with implementing GMA requirements to:

- identify, in consultation with a variety of local governments, the categories and types of costs local governments have experienced in implementing the GMA;
- distinguish the costs applicable to all local governments from those applicable only to GMA jurisdictions;
- obtain data from all local governments on the categories and types of costs;
- review and evaluate the impact of these costs on all local governments; and
- develop, in consultation with a variety of local governments, legislative recommendations to address the impact of these costs on local governments.

CTED must begin the study by September 1, 1999, and complete the study by June 30, 2001. CTED is required to submit progress reports on the study to the appropriate standing committees of the Legislature by January 31 of 2000 and 2001 and a final report no later than September 30, 2001.

These provisions expire October 1, 2001.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: For years counties and cities have testified about the cost burden associated with implementing the GMA. This bill gives local governments the opportunity and a mechanism to present data on these costs to the Legislature. CTED was asked for this information several years ago but was unable to provide accurate detailed information. CTED can prioritize its time to conduct this study.

(With concerns) The study should look at the benefits as well as the costs of implementing the GMA.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: (In support) Representative Mulliken, prime sponsor.

(In support with concerns) Eric Espenhorst, Friends of the Earth.

