
Local Government Committee

HB 1301

Brief Description: Providing rental assistance vouchers.

Sponsors: Representatives Kirby and Schindler.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Changes the vacancy rate threshold for construction of new affordable housing from 10 percent to 7 percent.
- Permits local governments to use housing trust funds for payment of deposits required by a landlord for affordable housing for persons with incomes at or below 50 percent of the area median income.

Hearing Date: 2/3/03

Staff: Amy Wood (786-7127).

Background:

County auditors are required to record deeds and other instruments that are filed and recorded with the county. County auditors are required to charge a \$10 surcharge for recording such documents, except for assignments or substitutions of previously recorded deeds of trust. County auditors may retain up to 5 percent of the collected funds for administration.

Forty percent of the remaining funds are deposited monthly with the State Treasurer into the Washington Housing Trust Account. The Housing Trust Fund includes revenue established under statute, legislative appropriations, private contributions, repayment of loans, and other sources. The fund was established to assist low and very low-income citizens in meeting their basic housing needs.

The Office of Community Development (OCD) within the Department of Community, Trade & Economic Development administers the state housing programs, including the Housing Trust Fund. The OCD is required to develop guidelines for use of these funds for building operation and maintenance costs of housing projects or units within housing projects that are available to low-income persons with incomes at or below 30 percent of the area median

income.

The remaining 60 percent of the funds are retained by the county and must be used by the county and its cities and towns for housing projects or units within housing projects that are available to low-income persons with incomes at or below 50 percent of the area median income. Local governments are prohibited from using the funds for construction of new housing if the vacancy rate for available low-income housing within the county rises above 10 percent.

Permissible uses for the funds by local governments are limited to:

- (1) Acquisition, construction, or rehabilitation of housing projects or units within a housing project that is affordable to persons with incomes at or below 50 percent of the area median income;
- (2) Supporting building operation and maintenance costs of housing projects or units within housing projects built with housing trust funds that are affordable to persons with incomes at or below 50 percent of the area median income, and that require a supplement to rent income to cover ongoing operation expenses; and
- (3) Rental assistance vouchers for housing projects or units within housing projects that are affordable to persons with incomes at or below 50 percent of the median income.

Summary of Bill:

Funds retained by the county for use by the county and its cities and towns for low-income housing projects may be used for rental assistance for payment of first and last month's rent, security, and other deposits required by a landlord for housing that is affordable to low-income persons with incomes at or below 50 percent of the area median income.

The vacancy rate threshold for use of funds for construction of new housing is lowered. Local governments are prohibited from using the funds for construction of new housing if at any time the vacancy rate for available low-income housing within the county rises above 7 percent.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.