

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2576

As Reported by House Committee On: Local Government

Title: An act relating to promoting the availability of affordable housing through the comprehensive plan requirements of the growth management act.

Brief Description: Promoting the availability of affordable housing through the comprehensive plan requirements of the growth management act.

Sponsors: Representatives Simpson, Appleton, Hasegawa, Ormsby, Santos and Chase.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Local Government: 1/22/08, 2/1/08 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires that a Growth Management Act comprehensive plan include specific provisions addressing land use needs with respect to "low-income housing" and "moderate-income housing."
- Creates statutory definitions for "low-income housing" and "moderate-income housing."

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Simpson, Chair; Takko, Vice Chair; Warnick, Ranking Minority Member; Schindler, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Eddy, Nelson and Schmick.

Staff: Thamas Osborn (786-7129).

Background:

The Growth Management Act (GMA) is the comprehensive land use planning framework for county and city governments in Washington. Enacted in 1990 and 1991, the GMA establishes

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numerous requirements for local governments obligated by mandate or choice to fully plan under the GMA (planning jurisdictions) and a reduced number of directives for all other counties and cities. Twenty-nine of 39 counties, and the cities within those counties, are planning jurisdictions.

The GMA directs planning jurisdictions to adopt internally consistent comprehensive land use plans, which are generalized, coordinated land use policy statements of the governing body. Comprehensive plans must address specified planning elements, each of which is a subset of a comprehensive plan. Planning jurisdictions must also adopt development regulations that implement and conform with the comprehensive plan.

Each comprehensive plan must include planning provisions addressing the following planning elements:

- land use;
- housing;
- capital facilities;
- utilities; and
- rural lands.

Planning for housing needs must include the following components;

- an inventory and analysis of existing and projected housing needs;
- a statement of the goals, policies, objectives, and mandatory provisions for the preservation, improvement, and development of housing; and
- identification of sufficient land for housing, including but not limited to government-assisted housing, manufactured housing, multifamily housing, group homes, and foster care facilities.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The planning for the housing element required in a GMA comprehensive plan must include specific provisions addressing land use needs with respect to "low-income housing" and "moderate-income housing."

Housing-related definitions are added to the GMA as follows:

- "Low-income housing" means housing that is affordable according to standards of the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development for ownership or rental. "Low-income housing" is characterized by housing intended to be occupied by, reserved for, or marketed for occupancy by households with a gross household income of 80 percent or less of the county's median gross household income for identically sized households.
- "Moderate-income housing" means housing that is affordable according to standards of the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development for ownership or rental. "Moderate-income housing" is characterized by housing intended to be occupied

by, reserved for, or marketed for occupancy by households with a gross household income of greater than 80 percent but less than 120 percent of the county's median gross household income for identically sized households.

The act also makes a technical revision by deleting an obsolete definition of "recreational land."

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill revises the definitions contained in the original bill as follows:

- deletes mandatory language in the definition of "low-income housing" pertaining to income requirements and replaces it with more permissive language stating that such housing is "intended to be" for families falling within stated income guidelines; and
- deletes mandatory language in the definition of "moderate-income housing" pertaining to income requirements and replaces it with more permissive language stating that such housing is "intended to be" for families falling within stated income guidelines.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This legislation should be passed because it creates a useful tool for the planning of low-income housing. We need legislation to address the housing issue and this bill represents a significant step in the right direction. It will contribute to solving the low-income housing crisis. The GMA is an appropriate place to address the low-income housing issue and the bill will make the GMA more consistent with the Washington State Housing Act. Contrary to the beliefs of some, the development of low-income housing will not create ghettos. The GMA needs the revisions provided by the bill so as to create explicit GMA coverage of current housing issues.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Velma Veloria, Homesight; Ruth Shearer, Lacey Planning Commissioner; Nick Federici, Washington Low-Income Housing Alliance; and Eric Johnson, Washington State Association of Counties.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.