

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6193

As of February 1, 2012

Title: An act relating to using population projections for growth management purposes.

Brief Description: Requiring counties to use the middle range population projection for growth management purposes.

Sponsors: Senator Ericksen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Government Operations, Tribal Relations & Elections: 1/30/12.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS, TRIBAL RELATIONS & ELECTIONS

Staff: Karen Epps (786-7424)

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 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.

Counties and cities are also required to satisfy specific planning requirements pertaining to urban growth areas (UGAs). Using population projections made by the Office of Financial Management (OFM), and subject to statutory requirements, GMA counties and each city within those counties must plan for population densities in UGAs so as to accommodate the urban growth that is projected to occur during the succeeding 20-year period.

By April 1 of each year, OFM is required to determine the population of each county of the state. Also, at least once every five years or upon the availability of decennial census data,

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

whichever is later, OFM must prepare 20-year growth management planning population projections for each GMA county. These projections are required to be expressed as a reasonable range developed within a standard high and low projection for the state. The middle range represents OFM's estimate of the most likely population projection for a county.

Summary of Bill: A county choosing to project future growth by deviating from the middle range population projection made by OFM must adopt a written explanation justifying the reason for the deviation, especially in terms of how the deviation enhances the ability of the county and its cities to achieve the goals of GMA.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: When it comes to what population level a county chooses, if a county decides not to go with the middle projection, the county has to give a reason as to why they are saying they want to use a higher projection or a lower projection. A county can choose whichever one they want, but if they deviate from the average, the county has to give an explanation as to why they are doing it. This bill requires that counties begin their planning process using OFMs middle range population projection. When a county selects a forecast below that which is most likely, it negatively affects all aspects of planning.

OTHER: This is safe harbor in that counties are not mandated to use the middle range population projection, but if there are substantial reasons to use the low or high range, a county can do that. Having a range for population projections allows the counties to have more flexibility. The concept that growth should go into cities is a good one. Generally assuring that urban facilities are provided within the 20 year planning horizon is often not up to the local government.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Ericksen, prime sponsor; Clayton Petrie, citizen.

OTHER: Josh Weiss, WA Assn. of Counties; Bill Clarke, WA Realtors Assn.; April Putney, Futurewise.