

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5001

As of January 17, 2013

Title: An act relating to requiring senate confirmation of growth management hearings board members.

Brief Description: Requiring senate confirmation of growth management hearings board members.

Sponsors: Senators Honeyford, Tom and Holmquist Newbry.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Governmental Operations: 1/17/13.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS

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, GMA establishes numerous planning requirements for counties and cities obligated by mandate or choice to fully plan under GMA. It also establishes a reduced number of directives for all other counties and cities.

The GMA establishes the Growth Management Hearings Board (GMHB). The GMHB, which is situated within the Environmental and Land Use Hearings Office, is comprised of three panels for the purposes of hearing and deciding cases within the following regions: central Puget Sound; eastern Washington; and western Washington. The GMHB consists of seven members qualified by experience or training in matters pertaining to land use law or land use planning. All GMHB members are appointed by the Governor for six-year terms, with two each residing in the geographic regions of the panels, three admitted to practice law, and no less than three that were formerly a city or county elected official. Additionally, no more than four members of the GMHB may be from the same political party.

Summary of Bill: All GMHB members must be confirmed by the Senate.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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.

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: It is important that members on the GMHB be confirmed. There is concern that people on the GMHB may not have experience with land use issues. Board members for the Pollution Control Hearings Board (PCHB) are confirmed. This is equally important because members of the GMHB exert a similar amount of power and control over local land use issues as PCHB members do over water and other issues. Confirmation will provide a vetting process that looks at the qualifications and credentials of a candidate for the GMHB. This quasi-judicial board makes decisions that have broad implications, especially for counties.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Honeyford, sponsor; Laura Merrill, Washington State Association of Counties.