

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5520

As of February 5, 2019

Title: An act relating to urban growth areas.

Brief Description: Concerning urban growth areas.

Sponsors: Senators Wilson, L., Takko, Short, Palumbo, Sheldon, Honeyford and Wagoner.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Local Government: 2/05/19.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Amends a provision relating to the extension of urban governmental services to rural areas to provide that extension occur when necessary to protect basic public health and safety or the environment.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Staff: Bonnie Kim (786-7316)

Background: Growth Management Act. The Growth Management Act (GMA) is the comprehensive land use planning framework for counties and cities in Washington. The GMA sets forth three broad planning obligations for those counties and cities who plan fully under the GMA: the county legislative authority must adopt a countywide planning policy; the county, and the cities within the county, must designate critical areas, agricultural lands, forestlands, and mineral resource lands, and adopt development regulations accordingly; and the county must designate and take other actions related to Urban Growth Areas (UGAs).

Urban Growth Areas. Counties that fully plan under the GMA must designate UGAs, areas within which urban growth must be encouraged and outside of which growth may occur only if it is not urban in nature. Planning jurisdictions must include within their UGAs sufficient areas and densities to accommodate projected urban growth for the succeeding 20-year period. In addition, cities must include sufficient areas to accommodate the broad range of needs and uses that will accompany the projected urban growth, including, as appropriate, medical, governmental, institutional, commercial, service, retail, and other nonresidential uses.

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.

Generally, cities are the units of local government most appropriate to provide urban governmental services. It is not appropriate to extend such services to rural areas except when necessary to protect basic public health and safety and the environment.

Summary of Bill: The provision relating to the extension of urban governmental services to rural areas is amended to provide that extension occur when necessary to protect basic public health and safety or the environment.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: The GMA requires an emergency to exist before local governments can consider impacts to public health and safety. This bill allows local governments more flexibility to consider environmental impacts as well as public health and safety when deciding whether to extend services. Cities are quite limited in their ability to provide services outside urban centers. Sewer connections outside UGAs are very limited under the GMA. It is unreasonable to require an emergency to exist before providing urban services away from urban centers.

CON: What seems a simple change is actually a chance to expand beyond the UGA and undermines the purpose of GMA to prevent sprawl. This legislation may undermine a number of court cases in Clark County.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Lynda Wilson, Prime Sponsor; Amber Carter, Identity Clark County; Greg Thornton, City of LaCenter.

CON: Bryce Yadon, Futurewise.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.