
SENATE BILL 5470

State of Washington

69th Legislature

2025 Regular Session

By Senators Goehner, Bateman, Chapman, Frame, Gildon, Nobles, and Saldaña

Read first time 01/23/25. Referred to Committee on Housing.

1 AN ACT Relating to establishing limitations on detached accessory
2 dwelling units outside urban growth areas; amending RCW 36.70A.696;
3 and adding a new section to chapter 36.70A RCW.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 36.70A
6 RCW to read as follows:

7 (1) Counties may allow detached accessory dwelling units outside
8 of urban growth areas if the county meets the requirements in
9 subsection (2) of this section, and such detached accessory dwelling
10 units are subject to development regulations that include the
11 following limitations:

12 (a) No parcel may have more than one attached or detached
13 accessory dwelling unit;

14 (b) The detached accessory dwelling unit is subject to the water
15 supply requirements of RCW 19.27.097 and any groundwater mitigation
16 requirements adopted by the county or department of ecology;

17 (c) The applicant must provide documentation that the existing or
18 proposed sewage or septic system is capable of handling the
19 additional demand placed upon it by the detached accessory dwelling
20 unit;

1 (d) The gross floor area of the detached accessory dwelling unit
2 may not exceed the gross floor area of what could be authorized by
3 the county as an expansion of the primary dwelling to create an
4 attached accessory dwelling unit and, in no case, exceed 1,296 square
5 feet. Floor areas exclude garages, porches, and unfinished basements;

6 (e) The detached accessory dwelling unit must utilize the same
7 driveway as the principal unit;

8 (f) The detached accessory dwelling unit must be sited within 150
9 feet of the principal unit;

10 (g) The detached accessory dwelling unit may be the existing
11 principal unit if the existing principal unit meets the requirements
12 of this subsection, is a single-family dwelling unit, and a new
13 principal unit that is a single-family dwelling unit is constructed
14 on the same parcel;

15 (h) A parcel may not be subdivided for the purposes of avoiding
16 the limits on development regulations described in this subsection;

17 (i) If the detached accessory dwelling unit is offered as a
18 short-term rental as defined in RCW 36.70A.696, the primary unit must
19 be owner-occupied; and

20 (j) The combined water withdrawal for the detached accessory
21 dwelling unit, primary unit, and any other domestic uses on the
22 parcel must not exceed the use limitations in RCW 90.44.050 for
23 domestic use.

24 (2) Counties may allow detached accessory dwelling units outside
25 of urban growth areas if the county takes the following actions to
26 account for detached accessory dwelling unit development:

27 (a) Track and report to the department annually the number of
28 detached accessory dwelling unit permits completed;

29 (b) Update the county's comprehensive land use plan during the
30 county's next required review and all subsequent reviews according to
31 RCW 36.70A.130(5)(b) to properly account for the number of detached
32 accessory dwelling units completed since the effective date of this
33 section and the projected development over the next 20-year planning
34 period utilizing the data collected and reported in (a) of this
35 subsection within the overall underlying density outside of urban
36 growth areas;

37 (c) Future amendments to the county's comprehensive land use plan
38 accounting for actual and projected detached accessory dwelling units
39 within the overall underlying density outside of urban growth areas
40 may not occur more than once every five years.

1 (3) Subsection (1) of this section is in addition to other county
2 authority enumerated in this chapter and does not:

3 (a) Affect or modify the validity of any county ordinance
4 authorizing accessory dwelling units adopted prior to the effective
5 date of this section;

6 (b) Exclude other means of authorizing accessory dwelling units
7 in urban or rural areas, if consistent with this section; or

8 (c) Exclude other innovative techniques under RCW
9 36.70A.070(5)(b), 36.70A.090, or 36.70A.177, if consistent with this
10 section.

11 **Sec. 2.** RCW 36.70A.696 and 2023 c 334 s 2 are each amended to
12 read as follows:

13 The definitions in this section apply throughout RCW 36.70A.697,
14 36.70A.698, 36.70A.680, (~~and~~) 36.70A.681, and section 1 of this act
15 unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

16 (1) "Accessory dwelling unit" means a dwelling unit located on
17 the same lot as a single-family housing unit, duplex, triplex,
18 townhome, or other housing unit.

19 (2) "Attached accessory dwelling unit" means an accessory
20 dwelling unit located within or attached to a single-family housing
21 unit, duplex, triplex, townhome, or other housing unit.

22 (3) "City" means any city, code city, and town located in a
23 county planning under RCW 36.70A.040.

24 (4) "County" means any county planning under RCW 36.70A.040.

25 (5) "Detached accessory dwelling unit" means an accessory
26 dwelling unit that consists partly or entirely of a building that is
27 separate and detached from a single-family housing unit, duplex,
28 triplex, townhome, or other housing unit and is on the same property.

29 (6) "Dwelling unit" means a residential living unit that provides
30 complete independent living facilities for one or more persons and
31 that includes permanent provisions for living, sleeping, eating,
32 cooking, and sanitation.

33 (7) "Gross floor area" means the interior habitable area of a
34 dwelling unit including basements and attics but not including a
35 garage or accessory structure.

36 (8) "Major transit stop" means:

37 (a) A stop on a high capacity transportation system funded or
38 expanded under the provisions of chapter 81.104 RCW;

39 (b) Commuter rail stops;

1 (c) Stops on rail or fixed guideway systems, including
2 transitways;

3 (d) Stops on bus rapid transit routes or routes that run on high
4 occupancy vehicle lanes; or

5 (e) Stops for a bus or other transit mode providing actual fixed
6 route service at intervals of at least fifteen minutes for at least
7 five hours during the peak hours of operation on weekdays.

8 (9) "Owner" means any person who has at least 50 percent
9 ownership in a property on which an accessory dwelling unit is
10 located.

11 (10) "Principal unit" means the single-family housing unit,
12 duplex, triplex, townhome, or other housing unit located on the same
13 lot as an accessory dwelling unit.

14 (11) "Short-term rental" means a lodging use, that is not a hotel
15 or motel or bed and breakfast, in which a dwelling unit, or portion
16 thereof, is offered or provided to a guest by a short-term rental
17 operator for a fee for fewer than 30 consecutive nights.

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