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**HOUSE BILL 2490**

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**State of Washington 66th Legislature 2020 Regular Session**

**By** Representative Appleton

AN ACT Relating to expanding the property tax exemption for new and rehabilitated multiple-unit dwellings in urban centers; amending RCW 84.14.010; and creating a new section.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) This section is the tax preference performance statement for the tax preference contained in section 2, chapter . . ., Laws of 2020 (section 2 of this act). This performance statement is only intended to be used for subsequent evaluation of the tax preference. It is not intended to create a private right of action by any party or be used to determine eligibility for preferential tax treatment.

(2) The legislature categorizes this tax preference as one intended to induce certain designated behavior by taxpayers, as indicated in RCW 82.32.808(2)(a).

(3) It is the legislature's specific public policy objective to incentivize developers to construct new multifamily housing thereby increasing the number of affordable housing units for low to moderate-income residents in certain urban growth areas.

(4) The legislature intends to extend the expiration date of the tax preference in this act, if a review finds that at least twenty percent of the new housing is developed and occupied by households earning:

(a) At or below eighty percent of the area median income, at the time of occupancy, adjusted for family size for the county in which the project is located; or

(b) When the housing is intended exclusively for owner occupancy, up to one hundred fifteen percent of the area median income, at the time of sale, adjusted for family size for the county in which the project is located.

(5) In order to obtain the data necessary to perform the review in subsection (4) of this section, the joint legislative audit and review committee may refer to data provided by cities or towns in which persons are utilizing this tax preference, the office of financial management, the department of commerce, the United States department of housing and urban development, and any other data sources, as needed by the joint legislative audit and review committee.

**Sec.**  RCW 84.14.010 and 2017 c 52 s 16 are each amended to read as follows:

The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(1) "Affordable housing" means residential housing that is rented by a person or household whose monthly housing costs, including utilities other than telephone, do not exceed thirty percent of the household's monthly income. For the purposes of housing intended for owner occupancy, "affordable housing" means residential housing that is within the means of low or moderate‑income households.

(2) "Campus facilities master plan" means the area that is defined by the University of Washington as necessary for the future growth and development of its campus facilities for campuses authorized under RCW 28B.45.020.

(3) "City" means either (a) a city or town with a population of at least fifteen thousand, (b) the largest city or town, if there is no city or town with a population of at least fifteen thousand, located in a county planning under the growth management act, or (c) a city or town with a population of at least five thousand located in a county subject to the provisions of RCW 36.70A.215.

(4) ((~~"County"~~)) (a) Except as provided in (b) of this subsection, "county" means a county with an unincorporated population of at least three hundred fifty thousand.

(b) From July 1, 2020, through July 1, 2030, "county" means a county with an unincorporated population of at least one hundred seventy thousand. The definition in this subsection (4)(b) applies to applications submitted under this chapter on or before July 1, 2030.

(5) "Governing authority" means the local legislative authority of a city or a county having jurisdiction over the property for which an exemption may be applied for under this chapter.

(6) "Growth management act" means chapter 36.70A RCW.

(7) "High cost area" means a county where the third quarter median house price for the previous year as reported by the Washington center for real estate research at Washington State University is equal to or greater than one hundred thirty percent of the statewide median house price published during the same time period.

(8) "Household" means a single person, family, or unrelated persons living together.

(9) "Low-income household" means a single person, family, or unrelated persons living together whose adjusted income is at or below eighty percent of the median family income adjusted for family size, for the county where the project is located, as reported by the United States department of housing and urban development. For cities located in high‑cost areas, "low‑income household" means a household that has an income at or below one hundred percent of the median family income adjusted for family size, for the county where the project is located.

(10) "Moderate‑income household" means a single person, family, or unrelated persons living together whose adjusted income is more than eighty percent but is at or below one hundred fifteen percent of the median family income adjusted for family size, for the county where the project is located, as reported by the United States department of housing and urban development. For cities located in high‑cost areas, "moderate‑income household" means a household that has an income that is more than one hundred percent, but at or below one hundred fifty percent, of the median family income adjusted for family size, for the county where the project is located.

(11) "Multiple-unit housing" means a building having four or more dwelling units not designed or used as transient accommodations and not including hotels and motels. Multifamily units may result from new construction or rehabilitated or conversion of vacant, underutilized, or substandard buildings to multifamily housing.

(12) "Owner" means the property owner of record.

(13) "Permanent residential occupancy" means multiunit housing that provides either rental or owner occupancy on a nontransient basis. This includes owner-occupied or rental accommodation that is leased for a period of at least one month. This excludes hotels and motels that predominately offer rental accommodation on a daily or weekly basis.

(14) "Rehabilitation improvements" means modifications to existing structures, that are vacant for twelve months or longer, that are made to achieve a condition of substantial compliance with existing building codes or modification to existing occupied structures which increase the number of multifamily housing units.

(15) "Residential targeted area" means an area within an urban center or urban growth area that has been designated by the governing authority as a residential targeted area in accordance with this chapter. With respect to designations after July 1, 2007, "residential targeted area" may not include a campus facilities master plan.

(16) "Rural county" means a county with a population between fifty thousand and seventy-one thousand and bordering Puget Sound.

(17) "Substantial compliance" means compliance with local building or housing code requirements that are typically required for rehabilitation as opposed to new construction.

(18) "Urban center" means a compact identifiable district where urban residents may obtain a variety of products and services. An urban center must contain:

(a) Several existing or previous, or both, business establishments that may include but are not limited to shops, offices, banks, restaurants, governmental agencies;

(b) Adequate public facilities including streets, sidewalks, lighting, transit, domestic water, and sanitary sewer systems; and

(c) A mixture of uses and activities that may include housing, recreation, and cultural activities in association with either commercial or office, or both, use.

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