

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2646

As Passed House:

February 6, 1996

Title: An act relating to buildable lands within urban growth areas.

Brief Description: Requiring sufficient buildable lands within urban growth areas.

Sponsors: Representatives Cairnes, Hargrove, Van Luven, Crouse, Morris, Hymes, Mulliken, Elliot, Honeyford, K. Schmidt, Goldsmith, Thompson, Benton and Johnson.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Trade & Economic Development: 1/24/96, 1/25/96 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/6/96, 76-21.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRADE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Van Luven, Chairman; Radcliff, Vice Chairman; Sheldon, Ranking Minority Member; Backlund; Ballasiotes; Hatfield; Hickel; Sherstad and Skinner.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 3 members: Representatives Veloria, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Mason and Valle.

Staff: Kenny Pittman (786-7392).

Background: The Growth Management Act (GMA) was enacted in 1990 and 1991 to establish a variety of requirements for counties and cities. A few requirements are established for counties and cities, and additional requirements are established for those counties and cities required to plan under all GMA requirements.

Counties planning under all GMA requirements must designate urban growth areas within the county, inside of which urban growth shall be encouraged and outside of which growth can occur only if is not urban in nature. Every city must be included within an urban growth area. Other areas may be included in urban growth areas if they are already characterized by urban growth or are adjacent to such areas. The county uses a 20-year population forecast that is prepared, at least once every ten

years, by the Office of Financial Management as the basis for designating its urban growth areas. A county that designates urban growth areas under the GMA must review its designated urban growth area or areas at least once every 10 years.

Summary of Bill: The county's required review process of urban growth areas is reduced from at least once every 10 years to at least once every five years. The review process must determine if the comprehensive plan provides sufficient buildable lands within the urban growth areas to accommodate estimated needs for 20 years. The review must include (1) an inventory of buildable lands within the urban growth area; (2) a determination of the actual density and actual average mix of residential housing types that have occurred the last five years; and (3) an analysis of housing needs by type and density range to determine the amount of land needed for the next 20-year period.

Based on its review of the comprehensive plan, a county may (1) amend its plan to include sufficient buildable lands to accommodate 20 years of housing needs and sites for new public schools; (2) amend its plan or development regulations to include new, incentive-based measures that increase the development of residential developments at sufficient densities to accommodate growth for a 20-year period with expanding the urban growth area; or (3) adopt a combination of the two.

Actions or incentive-based measures must be adopted as part of the development regulations and available to all properties within the urban growth area, not negotiated on a case-by-case basis. The actions or measures may include (1) incentives for higher densities; (2) removal or easing of approval standards or procedures; (3) minimum density ranges; (4) redevelopment and infill strategies; and (5) authorizing housing types not previously allowed by the plan or regulations.

The Office of Financial Management is directed to prepare 20-year population projections at least once every five years instead of once every 10 years.

"Buildable lands" is defined to mean land in urban and urbanizable areas that is suitable and available for residential and nonresidential uses. This includes both vacant land and developed land likely to be redeveloped during the period of the population project.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: Affordable housing is an important issue. The incentives provided in the bill will ensure that growth occurs inside the urban growth areas. Counties will

be able to respond to growth by having an inventory of available buildable land every five years. This will be an important planning tool for those fast-growing counties that must absorb most of the population growth.

Testimony Against: Reducing the local government comprehensive plan review process from every 10 years to every five years is an additional cost to local governments. The expansion of urban growth areas appear to be going against the intent of reducing urban sprawl. These new areas will require additional utility services. Someone will have to pay the costs of provided services to the expanded areas.

Testified: (Pro) Representative Cairnes, prime sponsor; and Suzie Rao and Bill Huyette, Building Industry Association of Washington. (Con) Mike Ryherd, 1000 Friends of Washington.