

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6637

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Government Operations, February 2, 1996

**Title:** An act relating to limitations on growth management hearings board discretion.

**Brief Description:** Limiting growth management hearings board discretion.

**Sponsors:** Senators Haugen, Sheldon, Winsley, Hale, Wood and Long.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Government Operations: 1/24/96, 2/2/96 [DPS].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6637 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Haugen, Chair; Sheldon, Vice Chair; Goings, Hale, Heavey and Winsley.

**Staff:** Rod McAulay (786-7754)

**Background:** The Growth Management Act (GMA) established three regional growth management hearings boards to review compliance with the deadlines and plans adopted pursuant to the act. There is concern that the standards of review have not been clearly stated and that the intent to give broad discretion to local government in developing comprehensive plans has not been sufficiently emphasized.

**Summary of Substitute Bill:** The standards of review for growth management hearings boards are amended and clarified. The presumption of validity for comprehensive plans and development regulations under the GMA is extended to any other required actions. Hearing boards determine compliance, not only with the GMA, but with approved countywide planning policies. The board finds compliance unless it finds that the petitioner has demonstrated by evidence that is substantial when reviewed in light of the whole record before the board that the city or county erroneously interpreted the requirements of the GMA. In determining compliance, the boards must defer to the city or county as to the relative weight to be given to each goal in arriving at a balanced plan, but all goals must be given effect.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:** The substitute clarified that while the hearings boards must defer to local government in prioritizing GMA goals, all goals must be given effect.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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

**Testimony For:** This reinforces the overall policy of local planning bottoms up approach.

**Testimony Against:** It may undermine the GMA process. It reduces ability for boards to protect the public from local politics.

**Testified:** Steve Clagett; Robert Dreyfus; Dick Ducharme; Mary Anne Jones; Mike Ryherd; Bob Hart; Dave Williams; Elizabeth Schragg; Charlie Brown; Martha Ireland; Scott Merriman; Scott Hazelgrove; Nancy Bagby.