

***Local Government & Housing
Committee***

HB 1616

Brief Description: *Maintaining a sufficient amount of land as suitable for urban development.*

Sponsors: *Representatives Mulliken, Mielke, Dunn, DeBolt and Crouse.*

Brief Summary of Bill

- *Requires counties or cities that redesignates land within the urban growth area (UGA) as a critical area or reduces UGA land development potential to: (1) docket the acreage and qualitative reduction in land development potential within the UGA as a deficiency; (2) increase the total UGA land area by the full docketed deficiency; and (3) review GMA plans and regulations to ensure consistency with the UGA changes.*

Hearing Date: *2/19/01*

Staff: *Caroleen Dineen (786-7156).*

Background:

The Growth Management Act (GMA) requires a county and its cities to plan if the county:

- *has a population of 50,000 or more and had its population increase by at least 17 percent in the past 10 years; or*
- *has a population fewer than 50,000 and had its population increase by at least 20 percent in the past 10 years (unless the county adopted or adopts a resolution removing itself from this requirement within the specified time period).*

The population and 10-year growth criteria are determined by the Office of Financial Management. Counties not meeting these criteria may choose to plan under the GMA. Currently, 29 of 39 counties plan under the GMA.

The GMA requires all counties and cities in the state to designate and protect critical areas and to designate natural resource lands. The GMA imposes additional requirements on counties and cities planning under the GMA (GMA jurisdictions), including identification and protection of critical areas; identification and conservation of agricultural, forest, and mineral resource lands; and adoption of county-wide planning policies to coordinate comprehensive planning among counties and their cities.

GMA jurisdictions must designate urban growth areas (UGAs), within which urban growth is encouraged and outside of which urban growth is prohibited. "Urban growth" is defined in the GMA to mean growth making intensive use of land to an extent creating incompatibility with natural resource uses. GMA jurisdictions must also adopt a comprehensive plan which contains planning policies and incorporates these UGA designations. A GMA jurisdiction's comprehensive plan must include certain required elements, including :

- a land use element, designating proposed general distribution, location and uses of land;*
- a housing element, inventorying available housing and identifying sufficient land for housing;*
- a capital facilities plan element, identifying existing capital facilities and forecasting future capital facilities needs and funding;*
- a utilities element, describing the general location and capacity of existing and proposed utilities;*
- a rural element, specifying policies for land development and uses for lands that are not designated for urban growth, agriculture, forest or mineral resources; and*
- a transportation element, implementing the land use element and identifying facilities and service needs, level of service standards, traffic forecasts, demand-management strategies, intergovernmental coordination, and financing.*

A GMA jurisdiction also must adopt development regulations to implement the comprehensive plan policies. By September 1, 2002, and every five years thereafter, GMA jurisdictions must review their comprehensive plans and development regulations for consistency with GMA requirements and must revise their plans and regulations if necessary.

The GMA also requires six western Washington counties (Clark, King, Kitsap, Pierce, Snohomish, and Thurston) and their cities to establish a monitoring and evaluation program to determine whether their county-wide planning policies are meeting planned residential densities and uses. This "buildable lands" evaluation must be submitted by September 1, 2002, and conducted every five years thereafter. If the evaluation shows that the densities are not being met, the county and its cities must take measures to increase consistency between what was envisioned and what has occurred.

Summary of Bill:

Counties and cities planning under RCW 36.70A.040 (GMA jurisdictions) that redesignate land within the designated urban growth area (UGA) as a critical area or, through amendment of GMA development regulations, reduce land development potential within the

UGA must docket the acreage and qualitative reduction in land development potential within the UGA to the county's planning director as a deficiency. The county must, in consultation with its cities, increase the total UGA land area by the full docketed deficiency, with comparable qualitative land characteristics, by September 1, 2002, and every five years thereafter. The counties and cities also must review and, if needed, amend GMA plans and regulations to ensure consistency with the UGA changes. The UGA land review may be combined with the mandatory review of UGA designations or with the buildable lands review and evaluation if the combination will not delay the UGA land review.

"Docketing" is defined for purposes of the UGA land review to mean compiling and maintaining a detailed list of land and land use deficiencies resulting from critical areas redesignations or development regulations amendments affecting the land development potential within the UGA. This detailed list must be presented in a manner ensuring that the deficiencies identified will be presented for the required actions by counties and will be available for public review. "Qualitative land characteristics" is defined for these purposes to mean the designated use of the land in deficiency, development suitability, general location, physical characteristics, and urban services availability.

Appropriation: *None.*

Fiscal Note: *Requested on February 1, 2001.*

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