

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1626

As Reported by House Committee On:
Public Safety

Title: An act relating to changing the date in which community impact statements are provided to the department of corrections.

Brief Description: Changing the date in which community impact statements are provided to the department of corrections.

Sponsors: Representatives Blake and J. Walsh.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Public Safety: 2/9/17, 2/16/17 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Increases the amount of time a local government has to provide the Department of Corrections with a community impact statement related to new community custody housing providers from 10 to 25 business days.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives Goodman, Chair; Pellicciotti, Vice Chair; Klippert, Ranking Minority Member; Hayes, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Appleton, Chapman, Griffey, Holy, Orwall, Pettigrew and Van Werven.

Staff: Alex Pearson (786-7291) and Kelly Leonard (786-7147).

Background:

Prior to an offender being released from confinement to community custody, the Department of Corrections (DOC) must approve the offender's release plan. The release plan must include a proposed residence and living arrangements. The DOC may deny the offender's release plan if it determines that the plan places the community or specific victims at risk, if

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it violates the terms of community custody, or if it places the offender at risk to reoffend or violate the conditions of community custody.

The DOC may provide rental vouchers to the offender for a period of up to three months if the rental vouchers will result in an approved release plan. The DOC must maintain a list of approved housing providers for the voucher program. If more than two voucher recipients will be residing per dwelling unit, their rental vouchers may only be paid to a housing provider on the list.

When selecting housing providers, the DOC must consider the compatibility of the housing with the surrounding neighborhood, underlying zoning, and must limit the concentration of housing providers who provide housing to sex offenders in a single neighborhood or area.

Whenever a new housing provider requests to be added to the list, the DOC must give notice to the local law and justice council, county sheriff, or chief law enforcement officer. If the county or city government creates a community impact statement and provides it to the DOC within 10 business days of receiving notice, the DOC must consider the community impact statement in determining whether to add the housing provider to the list. If the DOC then adds the housing provider to the list, it must include the community impact statement in the notice that a provider has been added within that county.

The community impact statement may include the number and location of other special needs housing in the neighborhood and a review of services and supports in the area to assist offenders in his or her transition.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The amount of time a local government has to submit a community impact statement is increased to 25 business days.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill modifies the amount of time a local government has to submit a community impact statement from 30 business days in the original bill to 25 business days.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The DOC recently notified the City of Longview (City) of a potential new housing provider for sex offenders, which would be located in a Longview neighborhood. City staff, in multiple departments, worked diligently and prepared the community impact statement but it still took 11 days to gather all of the information for the statement and perform the necessary due diligence. Despite receiving the statement late, the DOC was very understanding and ultimately decided not to proceed with that housing location based on the information provided by the City.

The current 10-business-day limit is burdensome and cities need more time to respond. It is important that these homes are set up in a suitable location and that communities are able to provide feedback about placement and safety. Providing more time will also head off potential notice issues in cities with smaller staff. The 30 business days this bill allows is a reasonable amount of time to prepare and submit a community impact statement.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Blake, prime sponsor; and Mike Wallin, Dave Campbell, and Don Jensen, City of Longview.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.