

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESSB 6638

As Passed Senate, February 13, 1996

Title: An act relating to standards for development regulations.

Brief Description: Prescribing standards for development regulations.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Government Operations (originally sponsored by Senators Haugen, Sheldon, Winsley, Hale, Wood and Long).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Government Operations: 1/24/96, 2/2/96 [DPS].
Passed Senate, 2/13/96, 43-6.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6638 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

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

Staff: Diane Smith (786-7410)

Background: While the goal of protecting critical areas under the Growth Management Act (GMA) is clear, the means of doing so are often not clear. This ambiguity is inherent in the developing nature of the scientific understanding of these critical areas. There is a perception that the cost to landowners of the protection of critical areas is given too little consideration in the relevant development regulations.

Summary of Bill: As of July 1, 1996, the policies and development regulations for critical areas enacted by counties and cities planning under GMA must result in the protection of the functions and values of the critical areas. These regulations and policies must consider the spectrum of best available science and result in the minimum possible restriction on the use and enjoyment of private property.

Critical and natural resource area regulations do not apply to repair, replacement, expansion or maintenance of existing utilities. The regulations also do not apply to the relocation or installation of utilities in existing utility corridors or in improved public or private rights of way pursuant to best management practices. Best management practices are defined.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: The bill clarifies that in these developing scientific fields, the term "best science" is really inaccurate.

Testimony Against: The assurance that best science would be a foundation of development regulations was one of the few concessions made last year to the environmentalists.

Testified: Numerous people.