

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1890

As Passed House:
February 6, 2024

Title: An act relating to housing authorities.

Brief Description: Concerning housing authorities.

Sponsors: Representatives Alvarado, Klicker, Peterson, Bateman, Connors, Macri, Corry, Barkis, Berry, Morgan, Leavitt, Tharinger, Reed, Ormsby, Barnard, Street, Gregerson, Reeves and Chopp.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Local Government: 1/12/24, 1/19/24 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/6/24, 97-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Allows legislative authorities that have created housing authorities by a specified time to form a joint housing authority composed of city governments without county authorization.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Duerr, Chair; Alvarado, Vice Chair; Goehner, Ranking Minority Member; Jacobsen, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Berg, Griffey and Riccelli.

Staff: Elizabeth Allison (786-7129).

Background:

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Housing Authorities.

A housing authority is an independent, not-for-profit municipal corporation of a city or county established to build homes and run a variety of housing programs to benefit working families, children, seniors, veterans, and people with disabilities. Housing authorities work in conjunction with local governments and agencies to develop housing strategies for communities. Housing authorities must follow all federal regulations and do not receive any funds from the state or local governments. There are currently 37 housing authorities in Washington.

A joint housing authority may be formed when the legislative authorities of one or more counties and the legislative authorities of any city or cities have authorized a joint housing authority by ordinance. The ordinance must prescribe:

- the number of commissioners;
- the method for commissioners' appointment and term lengths;
- the election of officers;
- the method for removal of commissioners;
- the allocation of all costs of the joint housing authority; and
- any other matters necessary for the operation of the joint housing authority.

Joint housing authorities have the same powers as any housing authority.

Summary of Bill:

Legislative authorities that have created housing authorities prior to June 5, 2024, may form joint housing authorities composed of two or more city governments without county authorization.

In addition to existing requirements, the ordinance creating the joint housing authority must:

- provide for the creation of a new municipal corporation; or
- provide that a housing authority created and previously activated, by resolution of one of the legislative authorities creating the joint housing authority, will be converted to and operate as a joint housing authority.

Unless a delayed date is specified in the ordinance, the creation of or conversion to a joint housing authority takes effect upon the latest effective date of the ordinance providing for its creation.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This is a simple technical fix. Housing authorities are an important tool for helping communities. Joint housing authorities have permitted communities and organizations who are already collaborating to come together. This collaboration is more operationally consistent and consolidates overlapping jobs so more money can go into communities and joint housing authorities have been a successful model. The Spokane Housing Authority serves Spokane, Spokane County, and Spokane Valley. The statute for joint housing authorities has not been updated in over 20 years, which makes it hard to make new housing authorities. This bill allows city-only housing authorities to collaborate without county involvement. This is a technical fix that reduces costs, saves time, and helps better serve communities.

Public housing authorities provide affordable housing in the state. Producing affordable housing in the state is becoming increasingly complex with multiple funding streams and changing regulations. Communities have discussed options for streamlining the process to meet these needs, and one good option is forming a joint housing authority. Creating a joint housing authority with two existing housing authorities is hard, if not impossible, under the existing statute. This bill allows creation of a new joint housing authority between cities or conversion of an existing housing authority.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Emily Alvarado, prime sponsor; and Lowe Krueger, Yakima Housing Authority and Association of Washington Housing Authorities.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.