

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5680

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Land Use & Planning, February 17, 2003

Title: An act relating to development regulations review by counties with low population densities.

Brief Description: Allowing counties with low population densities to be exempt from GMA review requirements.

Sponsors: Senators Mulliken, T. Sheldon and Morton.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Land Use & Planning: 2/10/03, 2/17/03 [DPS, DNP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LAND USE & PLANNING

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5680 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Mulliken, Chair; McCaslin, Morton and T. Sheldon.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senator Kline.

Staff: Jennifer Arnold (786-7471)

Background: Under the Growth Management Act (GMA), all counties and the cities located within those counties that were required to plan under the GMA or that opted to plan under the GMA must review and revise their comprehensive plans and development regulations by the time periods specified in the GMA.

Counties and cities not planning under the GMA must review and, if needed, revise their ordinances for critical area and natural resource lands by the time periods specified in the GMA.

Summary of Substitute Bill: Counties that have a population density per square mile of less than 55 persons and the cities therein may choose to extend the deadline requirements under the GMA to update their comprehensive plans and development regulations. If, however, a county's population density should grow to equal or exceed 55 persons per square mile, then the county and the cities therein must comply with all GMA update requirements within two years from the date the county's population density equals or exceeds 55 persons per square mile.

Eligible counties and the cities therein that choose to extend the deadline requirements for GMA updates must file notice of such election with the Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development no later than November 1, 2007. Failure to file such notice shall

result in those counties and cities being required to comply with the update requirements by December 2007.

Critical area and natural resource land ordinances must be updated within two years from the date the county's population density equals or exceeds 55 persons per square mile or within 15 years from the date the most recent critical area and natural resource land ordinance was adopted.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The population density threshold for a county or city to be eligible to extend the GMA update requirements is changed from 100 persons per square mile to 55 persons per square mile in a county.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: Population density per square mile is more reflective of the Growth Management Act goals than a percentage of the growth rate and is better designed to meet these goals, such as statewide economic development, affordable housing, and traffic mitigation. Further, a growth percentage rate can often be disproportional for certain small rural counties. The cities and counties support the bill in general because it allows both cities and counties to do updates within their discretion and to still do critical area ordinances. In addition, the bill will also result in fiscal savings to the cities and counties.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Dave Williams, Assoc. WA Cities; Scott Merriman, Assn. of Counties.