

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6600

As of January 16, 2006

Title: An act relating to residential density on islands consisting of rural lands.

Brief Description: Restricting the requirement for residential density on islands consisting of rural lands.

Sponsors: Senators Haugen, Jacobsen and Berkey.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Government Operations & Elections: 1/17/06.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ELECTIONS

Staff: Genevieve Pisarski (786-7488)

Background: Counties that plan under the Growth Management Act (GMA) must include in their comprehensive plans a rural element for lands that are neither included within urban growth areas nor designated as agricultural, forest, or mineral resource lands. Counties have discretion to consider local circumstances in establishing patterns of rural densities and uses, as long as they produce a written record that explains how the resulting rural element complies with the goals and requirements of the GMA. Overall, counties must provide for a variety of rural densities that are consistent with rural character. In a situation where a county designated its rural lands for a density of 1 unit per 5 acres and, at the same time, allowed use of zoning techniques that could result in a net density of 1 unit per 4 acres on those lands, the Western Washington Growth Management Hearings Board ruled that the county was not in compliance with the goals and requirements of the GMA, because it did not provide for a variety of rural densities and the net densities that were allowed promoted sprawl.

Summary of Bill: Provisions of the GMA that allow counties to foster land use patterns and develop a local vision of rural character will state expressly that the GMA does not require a maximum residential density on an island that is entirely rural and located in a county that consists entirely of islands and has a population density greater than a hundred persons per square mile.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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