S-4151.1

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**SENATE BILL 6285**

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**State of Washington 68th Legislature 2024 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Braun, Short, and L. Wilson

AN ACT Relating to ensuring the timely and balanced use of impact fees; and amending RCW 82.02.050, 82.02.070, and 82.02.080.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

**Sec.**  RCW 82.02.050 and 2015 c 241 s 1 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) It is the intent of the legislature:

(a) To ensure that adequate facilities are available to serve new growth and development;

(b) To promote orderly growth and development by establishing standards by which counties, cities, and towns may require, by ordinance, that new growth and development pay a proportionate share of the cost of new facilities needed to serve new growth and development; and

(c) To ensure that impact fees are imposed through established procedures and criteria so that specific developments do not pay arbitrary fees or duplicative fees for the same impact.

(2) Counties, cities, and towns that are required or choose to plan under RCW 36.70A.040 are authorized to impose impact fees on development activity as part of the financing for public facilities, provided that the financing for system improvements to serve new development must provide for a balance between impact fees and other sources of public funds and cannot rely ((~~solely~~)) primarily on impact fees.

(3)(a)(i) Counties, cities, and towns collecting impact fees must, by September 1, 2016, adopt and maintain a system for the deferred collection of impact fees for single-family detached and attached residential construction. The deferral system must include a process by which an applicant for a building permit for a single-family detached or attached residence may request a deferral of the full impact fee payment. The deferral system offered by a county, city, or town under this subsection (3) must include one or more of the following options:

(A) Deferring collection of the impact fee payment until final inspection;

(B) Deferring collection of the impact fee payment until certificate of occupancy or equivalent certification; or

(C) Deferring collection of the impact fee payment until the time of closing of the first sale of the property occurring after the issuance of the applicable building permit.

(ii) Counties, cities, and towns utilizing the deferral process required by this subsection (3)(a) may withhold certification of final inspection, certificate of occupancy, or equivalent certification until the impact fees have been paid in full.

(iii) The amount of impact fees that may be deferred under this subsection (3) must be determined by the fees in effect at the time the applicant applies for a deferral.

(iv) Unless an agreement to the contrary is reached between the buyer and seller, the payment of impact fees due at closing of a sale must be made from the seller's proceeds. In the absence of an agreement to the contrary, the seller bears strict liability for the payment of the impact fees.

(b) The term of an impact fee deferral under this subsection (3) may not exceed eighteen months from the date of building permit issuance.

(c) Except as may otherwise be authorized in accordance with (f) of this subsection (3), an applicant seeking a deferral under this subsection (3) must grant and record a deferred impact fee lien against the property in favor of the county, city, or town in the amount of the deferred impact fee. The deferred impact fee lien, which must include the legal description, tax account number, and address of the property, must also be:

(i) In a form approved by the county, city, or town;

(ii) Signed by all owners of the property, with all signatures acknowledged as required for a deed, and recorded in the county where the property is located;

(iii) Binding on all successors in title after the recordation; and

(iv) Junior and subordinate to one mortgage for the purpose of construction upon the same real property granted by the person who applied for the deferral of impact fees.

(d)(i) If impact fees are not paid in accordance with a deferral authorized by this subsection (3), and in accordance with the term provisions established in (b) of this subsection (3), the county, city, or town may institute foreclosure proceedings in accordance with chapter 61.12 RCW.

(ii) If the county, city, or town does not institute foreclosure proceedings for unpaid school impact fees within forty-five days after receiving notice from a school district requesting that it do so, the district may institute foreclosure proceedings with respect to the unpaid impact fees.

(e)(i) Upon receipt of final payment of all deferred impact fees for a property, the county, city, or town must execute a release of deferred impact fee lien for the property. The property owner at the time of the release, at his or her expense, is responsible for recording the lien release.

(ii) The extinguishment of a deferred impact fee lien by the foreclosure of a lien having priority does not affect the obligation to pay the impact fees as a condition of final inspection, certificate of occupancy, or equivalent certification, or at the time of closing of the first sale.

(f) A county, city, or town with an impact fee deferral process on or before April 1, 2015, is exempt from the requirements of this subsection (3) if the deferral process delays all impact fees and remains in effect after September 1, 2016.

(g)(i) Each applicant for a single-family residential construction permit, in accordance with his or her contractor registration number or other unique identification number, is entitled to annually receive deferrals under this subsection (3) for the first twenty single-family residential construction building permits per county, city, or town. A county, city, or town, however, may elect, by ordinance, to defer more than twenty single-family residential construction building permits for an applicant. If the county, city, or town collects impact fees on behalf of one or more school districts for which the collection of impact fees could be delayed, the county, city, or town must consult with the district or districts about the additional deferrals. A county, city, or town considering additional deferrals must give substantial weight to recommendations of each applicable school district regarding the number of additional deferrals. If the county, city, or town disagrees with the recommendations of one or more school districts, the county, city, or town must provide the district or districts with a written rationale for its decision.

(ii) For purposes of this subsection (3)(g), an "applicant" includes an entity that controls the applicant, is controlled by the applicant, or is under common control with the applicant.

(h) Counties, cities, and towns may collect reasonable administrative fees to implement this subsection (3) from permit applicants who are seeking to delay the payment of impact fees under this subsection (3).

(i) In accordance with RCW ((~~44.28.812 and~~)) 43.31.980, counties, cities, and towns must cooperate with and provide requested data, materials, and assistance to the department of commerce and the joint legislative audit and review committee.

(4) The impact fees:

(a) Shall only be imposed for system improvements that are reasonably related to the new development;

(b) Shall not exceed a proportionate share of the costs of system improvements that are reasonably related to the new development; ((~~and~~))

(c) Shall be used for system improvements that will reasonably benefit the new development; and

(d) Shall not make up more than 50 percent of the financing for any individual system improvement.

(5)(a) Impact fees may be collected and spent only for the public facilities defined in RCW 82.02.090 which are addressed by a capital facilities plan element of a comprehensive land use plan adopted pursuant to the provisions of RCW 36.70A.070 or the provisions for comprehensive plan adoption contained in chapter 36.70, 35.63, or 35A.63 RCW. After the date a county, city, or town is required to adopt its development regulations under chapter 36.70A RCW, continued authorization to collect and expend impact fees is contingent on the county, city, or town adopting or revising a comprehensive plan in compliance with RCW 36.70A.070, and on the capital facilities plan identifying:

(i) Deficiencies in public facilities serving existing development and the means by which existing deficiencies will be eliminated within a reasonable period of time;

(ii) Additional demands placed on existing public facilities by new development; and

(iii) Additional public facility improvements required to serve new development.

(b) If the capital facilities plan of the county, city, or town is complete other than for the inclusion of those elements which are the responsibility of a special district, the county, city, or town may impose impact fees to address those public facility needs for which the county, city, or town is responsible.

**Sec.**  RCW 82.02.070 and 2011 c 353 s 8 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) Impact fee receipts shall be earmarked specifically and retained in special interest-bearing accounts. Separate accounts shall be established for each type of public facility for which impact fees are collected. Additionally, impact fees collected prior to July 1, 2024, and impact fees collected after that date must be maintained in separate accounts for each type of public facility for which impact fees are collected. All interest shall be retained in the account and expended for the purpose or purposes for which the impact fees were imposed. Annually, each county, city, or town imposing impact fees shall provide a report on each impact fee account showing the source and amount of all moneys collected, earned, or received and system improvements that were financed in whole or in part by impact fees.

(2) Impact fees for system improvements shall be expended only in conformance with the capital facilities plan element of the comprehensive plan.

(3)(a) Except as provided otherwise by (b) of this subsection, impact fees collected before July 1, 2024, shall be expended or encumbered for a permissible use within ten years of receipt, unless there exists an extraordinary and compelling reason for fees to be held longer than ten years. ((~~Such~~)) Impact fees collected after July 1, 2024, shall be expended or encumbered for a permissible use within five years of receipt, unless there exists an extraordinary and compelling reason for fees to be held longer than five years. Any such extraordinary or compelling reasons shall be identified in written findings by the governing body of the county, city, or town.

(b) School impact fees collected before July 1, 2024, must be expended or encumbered for a permissible use within ten years of receipt, unless there exists an extraordinary and compelling reason for fees to be held longer than ten years. ((~~Such~~)) Impact fees collected after July 1, 2024, shall be expended or encumbered for a permissible use within five years of receipt, unless there exists an extraordinary and compelling reason for fees to be held longer than five years. Any such extraordinary or compelling reasons shall be identified in written findings by the governing body of the county, city, or town.

(4) Impact fees may be paid under protest in order to obtain a permit or other approval of development activity.

(5) Each county, city, or town that imposes impact fees shall provide for an administrative appeals process for the appeal of an impact fee; the process may follow the appeal process for the underlying development approval or the county, city, or town may establish a separate appeals process. The impact fee may be modified upon a determination that it is proper to do so based on principles of fairness. The county, city, or town may provide for the resolution of disputes regarding impact fees by arbitration.

**Sec.**  RCW 82.02.080 and 2011 c 353 s 9 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The current owner of property on which an impact fee has been paid may receive a refund of such fees if the county, city, or town fails to expend or encumber the impact fees within ((~~ten years of when the fees were paid or other such period of time established pursuant to~~)) the time period established or modified as provided in RCW 82.02.070(3) on public facilities intended to benefit the development activity for which the impact fees were paid. In determining whether impact fees have been encumbered, impact fees shall be considered encumbered on a first in, first out basis. The county, city, or town shall notify potential claimants by first-class mail deposited with the United States postal service at the last known address of claimants.

The request for a refund must be submitted to the county, city, or town governing body in writing within one year of the date the right to claim the refund arises or the date that notice is given, whichever is later. Any impact fees that are not expended within these time limitations, and for which no application for a refund has been made within this one-year period, shall be retained and expended on the indicated capital facilities. Refunds of impact fees under this subsection shall include interest earned on the impact fees.

(2) When a county, city, or town seeks to terminate any or all impact fee requirements, all unexpended or unencumbered funds, including interest earned, shall be refunded pursuant to this section. Upon the finding that any or all fee requirements are to be terminated, the county, city, or town shall place notice of such termination and the availability of refunds in a newspaper of general circulation at least two times and shall notify all potential claimants by first-class mail to the last known address of claimants. All funds available for refund shall be retained for a period of one year. At the end of one year, any remaining funds shall be retained by the local government, but must be expended for the indicated public facilities. This notice requirement shall not apply if there are no unexpended or unencumbered balances within an account or accounts being terminated.

(3) A developer may request and shall receive a refund, including interest earned on the impact fees, when the developer does not proceed with the development activity and no impact has resulted.

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