

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5615

As of February 12, 2025

Title: An act relating to project permit applications for residential housing units.

Brief Description: Concerning project permit applications for residential housing units.

Sponsors: Senators Salomon and Nobles.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Housing: 2/12/25.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires that a proposed residential housing project within the incorporated areas of an urban growth area must be considered under the zoning or other land use control ordinances in effect at the time a fully complete project permit application has been submitted.
- States that the requirements of a fully completed application must be defined by local ordinance.
- Establishes that a project permit application is not deemed invalid or incomplete on the basis that an applicable fee has not been paid or an applicable notice has not been posted or delivered.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING

Staff: Benjamin Omdal (786-7442)

Background: Growth Management Act. The Growth Management Act (GMA) is the comprehensive land use planning framework for counties and cities in Washington. The GMA establishes land use designation and environmental protection requirements for all Washington counties and cities. The GMA also establishes a significantly wider array of planning duties for 28 counties, and the cities within those counties, that are obligated to

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satisfy all planning requirements of the GMA.

The GMA directs fully planning jurisdictions to adopt internally consistent comprehensive land use plans. Comprehensive plans are implemented through locally adopted development regulations, and both the plans and the local regulations are subject to review and revision requirements prescribed in the GMA.

Urban Growth Areas. Counties that fully plan under the GMA are required to designate urban growth areas (UGAs) within their boundaries sufficient to accommodate a planned 20-year population projection range provided by the Office of Financial Management. Each city located within a planning county must be included within a UGA. Urban growth must be encouraged within the UGAs, and only growth that is not urban in nature can occur outside of the UGAs.

Project Permit Process. Before developing land, a developer must obtain permits from the local government allowing the development. These permits can include land use permits, environmental permits, building permits, and others, and are known as project permits. When a county or city planning under the GMA is reviewing a project, its comprehensive plan and development regulations must serve as the basis for the project permit review.

Summary of Bill: A proposed project to provide one or more residential housing units within the incorporated areas in a UGA must be considered under the zoning or other land use control ordinances in effect on the subject location at the time a fully completed project permit application has been submitted to the appropriate city official.

The requirements for a fully completed application shall be defined by local ordinance.

A local ordinance or regulation may allow the jurisdiction's processing and review of a permit to be paused until applicable fees are paid and notices are posted or delivered. A project permit application is not deemed invalid or incomplete on the basis that an applicable fee has not been paid or an applicable notice has not been posted or delivered.

The bill specifies that limitations imposed by the act do not restrict conditions imposed by the State Environmental Policy Act.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 3, 2025.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

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