

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5753

As of February 21, 2025

Title: An act relating to establishing a public housing task force.

Brief Description: Establishing a public housing task force.

Sponsors: Senators Hasegawa, Trudeau, Alvarado, Conway and Saldaña.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Housing: 2/21/25.

<p>Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creates a public housing task force.
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SENATE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING

Staff: Melissa Van Gorkom (786-7491)

Background: The Department of Commerce (Commerce) administers many of the state's housing and homelessness programs. These programs include providing funding and support to local governments and nonprofit organizations who provide housing, services and subsidies in local communities.

Summary of Bill: A public housing task force is established to look at: using a public housing paradigm as means of meeting housing demand for the future; and leveraging publicly constructed, owned, and operated mixed-income housing.

The task force must provide a preliminary report to the Legislature by July 1, 2026. The report must, at minimum, review and consider the following:

- the extent to which funding is being used or could be used towards development of mixed-income housing;
- alternative funding strategies for publicly owned mixed-use housing;

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- review of the land inventory conducted by state agencies and other available public land to determine if the land could be used for publicly owned housing development and whether a state land bank or similar structure could facilitate development of affordable housing;
- review of the United Nations Human Rights Office of the high commissioner's definition of housing adequacy and develop a strategic plan to create livable communities; and
- structural governance and financing changes that may be necessary to the state's housing strategy to address the housing crisis on a statewide basis.

The task force must provide a final report to the Governor and Legislature by November 1, 2026 that includes recommendations regarding:

- how to restructure public housing development to address affordability at all income levels;
- strategies to implement public housing to increase affordability of units; and
- strategies to create whole livable communities using public housing as the anchor strategies with all necessary amenities required for healthy communities.

The task force will include the following members:

- one member from each of the two largest caucuses of the Senate;
- one member from each of the two largest caucuses of the House of Representatives;
- the Lieutenant Governor or the Lieutenant Governor's designee;
- the director of Commerce or the director's designee;
- one representative from the Washington State Housing Finance Commission;
- one representative from each ethnic commission, appointed by the director of each respective commission;
- the director of the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs, or the director's designee;
- a representative of a builders association;
- a representative of architects;
- an organization representing the nonprofit housing development industry;
- two representatives from public housing authorities, with one representative from east of the crest of the Cascade mountains and one representative from west of the crest of the Cascade mountains;
- two representatives of the Association of Washington Cities, with one representative from a city that is located east of the crest of the Cascade mountains and one representative from a city that is located west of the crest of the Cascade mountains; and
- at least three individuals from underrepresented populations who have direct lived experience with housing instability.

Commerce must administer and provide staff support for the task force. The task force must hold its first meeting within 45 days of final appointments to the task force and must meet at least twice each year thereafter. Meeting summaries must be posted to the Commerce website within 30 days of any task force meeting.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 13, 2025.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: Yes.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Housing is such a big issue but our housing strategy has been misdirected. We did public housing after WWII to invest in housing near factories but through the 60s and 70s the strategy changed and moved toward developer based housing and away from public housing. Public housing had its problems, being segregated and falling into disrepair but this bill would put a new direction and vision for housing because only the public has the adequacy and capacity to build a sufficient number of housing units to address the supply issue.

This is not like what the projects were, instead it envisions mixed income diverse communities that provide the services such as healthcare, childcare, store fronts, and parks needed for livable communities. The current paradigm focuses on low-income and provide tax breaks to build housing which doesn't seem to be working since we are not catching up, we are falling short of our goal. The state is losing revenue on this. It is not in the developers best interest to create affordable housing because when there is a shortage in supply, that increases the value of their property. This proposal would have the task force look at how we will hit the goal. It also boils down to public financing because the need for public housing and the financing capacity to build it go hand-in-hand and there is another bill about a public bank that would help with that.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Bob Hasegawa, Prime Sponsor.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.