SENATE BILL REPORT
SB 6015

As of January 21, 2026

Title: An act relating to permit-ready residential building plans.

Brief Description: Concerning permit-ready residential building plans.

Sponsors: Senators Bateman, Frame, Gildon, Liias, Lovelett, Nobles, Salomon and Shewmake.

Brief History:
Committee Activity: Housing: 1/21/26.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Department of Labor and Industries (L&I) to establish a process to solicit and publish permit-ready plans for factory built housing for selected housing types.
- Creates requirements for permit-ready plans, including that they meet all applicable building and energy code requirements.
- Requires cities and counties planning under the Growth Management Act to approve land-use applications that use permit-ready plans published by L&I that meet specified conditions.
- Allows cities and counties to review applications for permit-ready plans for specific local site conditions and requires that they exempt permit-ready plans from all elements included as part of the state-approved plan.
- Requires the Department of Commerce to develop and publish model ordinances to streamline local implementation of the permit-ready plans, and requires each planning county and city to adopt the model ordinances or ones that are substantially similar.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

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Background: Factory Built Housing. The Department of Labor & Industries (L&I) regulates factory built housing which include any structure designed primarily for human occupancy, other than a manufactured or mobile home, the structure or any room of which is either entirely or substantially prefabricated or assembled at a place other than a building site. L&I must adopt and enforce rules that protect the health, safety, and property of the people of this state by assuring that all factory built housing are structurally sound and that the plumbing, heating, electrical, and other components thereof are reasonably safe. Factory-built housing may not be installed in the state unless it is approved by and bears an insignia of approval from L&I.

Building Permits and Codes. Before developing land, a developer must obtain various permits from the local government with jurisdiction over the land allowing the development, including a building permit. The State Building Code (Building Code) establishes minimum performance standards and requirements for construction and construction materials in the state, consistent with accepted standards of engineering, fire, and life safety.

The Building Code comprises a number of model codes and standards, developed and published by international and national organizations, which are adopted by reference in the State Building Code Act (Act). Model codes and standards adopted in the Act include the International Building Code (IBC), the International Residential Code (IRC), and the Energy Code.

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 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.

Summary of Bill: Permit-Ready Plans. L&I, with advice and input from the Department of Commerce (Commerce) and the State Building Code Council, shall establish a process to solicit and publish permit-ready plans for factory built housing for each of the following housing types:

- single-family detached;
- detached accessory dwelling units; and
- units with no less than two or more than eight attached, stacked, or clustered

homes—such as duplexes.

L&I must also create and maintain a public-facing website for approved permit-ready plans.

The plans published by L&I must:

- meet all applicable Building Code and State Energy Code requirements;
- indicate the climate zone under the Energy Code for which they meet all applicable requirements;
- indicate the dated version of the applicable codes with which the plans are compliant;
- include a waiver signed by the building plan's creator that waives confidentiality and expressly allows use of the plan in the permit-ready program; and
- allow county and city building departments to review proposed permit-ready plans for a period of no less than 30 days prior to publication.

Cities and counties may review applications for permit-ready plans to verify that the plan is a state-approved plan.

No civil liability may be imposed on the state or its officers and employees, or on any creator of a residential building plan under the program except upon proof of bad faith or willful misconduct.

Approval of Land-Use Applications using Permit-Ready Plans. Beginning January 1, 2027, each planning county and city must approve land-use applications that use permit-ready plans published by L&I on lots that are:

- lawfully established units of land;
- within an urban growth area;
- zoned to allow residential use;
- at least 1500 square feet;
- not covered by slopes averaging more than 15 percent;
- not within an area identified by a comprehensive plan as environmentally sensitive or containing significant natural resources, open space or scenic areas, or a natural hazard area; and
- not designated as a critical area.

Planning cities and counties shall exempt permit-ready plans from local plan review for code compliance on all elements addressed by, and included as part of, the permit-ready plan.

Cities and counties may review applications for permit-ready plans to verify that the plan is a state-approved plan, for specific local site conditions, and applicability of the geographic and climatic design criteria used in the permit-ready plan design.

Department of Commerce Model Ordinances. Commerce must develop and publish model

ordinances that may be readily adopted by a local government in order to streamline local implementation of permit-ready plans, including, but not limited to, ordinances that create a process for approving residential developments utilizing permit-ready plans, subject to local zoning requirements.

Each planning county or city must adopt the model ordinances developed by Commerce, or a substantially similar ordinance upon written approval from Commerce.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Factory-built housing provides cost-effective housing. Permit-ready plans would allow jurisdictions across the state to use these plans to meet housing needs. Other states have identified pre-approved plans as an important tool of increasing housing supply. The bill would reduce the cost and time of creating housing and provides guarantees that these projects would be safe and habitable. Current pre-approved backyard cottage plans have helped create homes that otherwise may have not been built. The bill can streamline the development process for affordable housing, helping to build faster and to avoid detrimental price fluctuations. Factory-built housing can produce homes faster and more affordably than stick-built construction. Manufacturers currently face demand uncertainties due to differing jurisdiction requirements. The process of approving factory-built housing between jurisdictions can vary widely despite needing to meet the same building code requirements. The bill would provide predictability for the factory-built housing industry. This bill is the next step to help create housing that is affordable for Washingtonians. Many jurisdictions do not have the resources to create their own pre-approved plan libraries.

OTHER: The Department of Labor and Industries wants to lean into this concept as L&I does similar work that function well due to only needing one approval. Pre-approved plans are an exciting opportunity, but counties want to get the approach correct without duplicating or stepping on current processes in a way that would undercut the bill.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Jessica Bateman, Prime Sponsor; Michone Preston, Habitat for Humanity of Washington State; Caitlin Sullivan; MATT HUTCHINS, CAST architecture; Deb Flagan, Hayden Homes; Joshua Schaaf, Craft Contracting and Consulting; Geoff Anderson, AIA Washington Council; Dan Bertolet, Sightline Institute.

OTHER: Tammy Fellin, Department of Labor & Industries; Curtis Steinhauer, Washington State Association of Counties.

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