SENATE BILL REPORT
SB 6015

As of February 6, 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, 2/04/26 [DPS-WM].
Ways & Means: 2/06/26.

Brief Summary of First Substitute Bill

- Requires the Department of Labor and Industries (L&I) to establish a process to solicit and publicize permit-ready plans for factory built housing for selected housing types.
- Creates requirements for permit-ready plans.
- Prohibits cities and counties planning under the Growth Management Act from denying land-use applications for factory built housing that use permit-ready plans published by L&I solely on the basis of noncompliance with local architectural design and aesthetic standards.
- Allows cities and counties to review proposed permit-ready plans.
- 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

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6015 be substituted therefor, and the

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substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Bateman, Chair; Alvarado, Vice Chair; Goehner, Ranking Member; Gildon, Orwall, Salomon and Trudeau.

Staff: Benjamin Omdal (786-7442)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Staff: Trevor Press (786-7446)

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 (First Substitute): Permit-Ready Plans. L&I shall establish a process to solicit and publicize 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. In addition, L&I must develop a memorandum of agreement to be signed by L&I and the creator of each permit-ready plan, such that the creator of the plan expressly allows the use of the plan, retains ownership and copyright, and releases the state and local governments from claims relating to program participation and subsequent licensing, and that L&I has the right and license to use and copy the plan as necessary.

L&I must determine maximum licensing fees that may be charged to license a permit-ready plan, and update these maximums at each code cycle change.

Each permit-ready plan published by L&I must:

- have received design plan approval from L&I;
- indicate the climate zone under the Energy Code for which it meets all applicable requirements;
- indicate the dated version of the applicable codes with which the plan is compliant;
- indicate the wildfire hazard level for which the plan meets the wildlife urban interface code requirements;
- include a signed memorandum of agreement between L&I and the plan's creator; and
- allow county and city building departments to review proposed permit-ready plans prior to publication.

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.

Permit-ready plans must be approved for a specific edition of the state building code and expire upon the beginning of a new state building code cycle change.

L&I may adopt rules necessary to implement this section.

Exemption from Local Zoning Design Standards. Factory built housing using permit-ready plans shall be exempted from local zoning design standards and review related to aesthetics and architectural features, including, but not limited to, fenestration, entrances, rooflines, materials, articulation, and façades, unless those standards are part of a wildlife urban interface code or are expressly related to health and safety.

Land-Use Applications using Permit-Ready Plans. Beginning January 1, 2027, each planning county and city may not deny land use applications for factory built housing using permit-ready plans solely on the basis of noncompliance with local architectural design and aesthetic standards.

Cities and counties may review applications for permit-ready plans to verify that:

- the plan is a state-approved plan for the current State Building Code Cycle;
- as determined by L&I, the permit-ready plan is valid in the city or county, rated for the applicable climate zone, and rated for the applicable wildfire hazard zone; and
- the site plan complies with all relevant requirements related to site conditions, density, dimensional standards, building setbacks, fire separation distances, right of way dedications, stormwater, access and circulation, tree retention, landscaping, steep slopes, hazard areas, and any other local land use or zoning requirements.

Cities and counties may assess plan review fees on applications for factory built homes using permit-ready plans provided that the fees are calculated based on actual staff time and a reasonable estimate of direct and indirect resources expended, and the fees do not exceed standard plan review fees for a comparable application not using a permit-ready plan.

Department of Commerce Model Ordinances. The Department of Commerce (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 permit-ready plans for factory built homes.

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

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY HOUSING COMMITTEE (First Substitute):

- Directs L&I to develop a memorandum of agreement to be signed by L&I and the creator of each permit-ready plan, and to determine maximum licensing fees.
- Adds wildfire hazard level to the type of information a plan must indicate.
- Exempts factory built housing using permit-ready plans from local zoning design standards and review related to aesthetics and architectural features.
- Changes the requirement that local jurisdictions must approve permit-ready plans if they meet specified conditions to local jurisdictions may not deny land use applications on the basis of noncompliance with local architectural design and aesthetic standards.
- Adds factory built commercial structures to definition of permit-ready plan and specifies that permit-ready plans apply to factory built housing.
- Provides rulemaking authority to L&I.
- Adds effective date of July 1, 2028.
- Specifies that L&I will coordinate with Commerce and State Building Code Council as necessary.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Effective Date: The bill contains several effective dates. Please refer to the bill.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill (Housing): *The committee recommended a different version of the bill than what was heard.* 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 (Housing): 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 (Housing): No one.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on First Substitute (Ways & Means): OTHER: Pre-approved plans represent an exciting opportunity to speed up the permitting process. There is still work to do to refine the approach in this bill. Many counties are already implementing pre-approved plans locally. Do not duplicate or step on those processes in a

way that would work counter to the bill. Instead, start with a pilot program with a small cohort of counties and cities. This would allow the state to work out the kinks and come back with a proven model for statewide implementation. We have provided a proviso language for a pilot program.

Persons Testifying (Ways & Means): OTHER: Curtis Steinhauer, Washington State Association of Counties.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Ways & Means): No one.