
SENATE BILL 5753

State of Washington

69th Legislature

2025 Regular Session

By Senators Hasegawa, Trudeau, Alvarado, Conway, and Saldaña

Read first time 02/14/25. Referred to Committee on Housing.

1 AN ACT Relating to establishing a public housing task force;
2 creating new sections; and providing an expiration date.

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

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that every
5 Washington resident deserves access to adequate housing, a
6 fundamental human right recognized by the United Nations universal
7 declaration of human rights. Despite the state's economic growth,
8 thousands of individuals remain homeless, including working families
9 who cannot afford housing near their jobs, people who have lost their
10 homes due to foreclosure or medical debt, and individuals with
11 disabilities who are unable to work.

12 (2) The legislature further finds that Washington is experiencing
13 a severe housing shortage, with projections indicating that 1,100,000
14 new housing units will be needed by 2040 to meet demand. However,
15 current development trends suggest the state will fall at least
16 500,000 units short, exacerbating affordability challenges and
17 deepening the housing crisis. While nonprofit developers and public
18 housing authorities play a role in addressing housing insecurity,
19 their efforts alone are insufficient to meet the scale of need.

20 (3) The legislature finds that previous approaches, tax breaks,
21 incentives, and financial subsidies, have failed to generate the

1 necessary housing supply. The private market has neither the
2 incentive nor the ability to produce affordable housing at the scale
3 required. Developers benefit from constrained supply, as rising
4 property values increase profits, reducing their motivation to build
5 affordable housing. Furthermore, reliance on tax incentives depletes
6 state resources without correcting the underlying imbalance between
7 housing supply and demand.

8 (4) The legislature further finds that housing has increasingly
9 become a commodity for financial speculation rather than a basic
10 human need. The financialization of housing, driven by global capital
11 markets and speculative investment, has accelerated displacement and
12 eroded affordability, particularly for low-income communities, people
13 with disabilities, and communities of color. The rising cost of
14 housing, combined with spatial segregation and economic exclusion,
15 has left many Washington residents without stable, secure housing.

16 (5) The legislature recognizes that Washington has both the means
17 and responsibility to address this crisis, yet the gap between supply
18 and demand continues to grow, leading to escalating housing costs
19 across all income levels. The legislature intends to restore public
20 housing as a core function of government. Public housing in the
21 United States was historically undermined by deliberate government
22 disinvestment and racially exclusionary policies, yet successful
23 models from other jurisdictions demonstrate that well planned,
24 publicly owned housing can provide long-term affordability and
25 stability. The state and local governments collectively own vast
26 amounts of public land, which must be strategically leveraged to
27 reduce development costs and ensure housing remains permanently
28 affordable.

29 (6) The legislature further finds that local governments lack the
30 financial and administrative capacity to address the housing crisis
31 at the necessary scale.

32 (7) Therefore, the legislature intends to look at establishing a
33 statewide housing authority to oversee the development, maintenance,
34 and operation of public housing. The authority should be tasked with
35 ensuring that all public housing developments align with
36 internationally recognized housing adequacy standards, including
37 security of tenure, affordability, accessibility, and proximity to
38 essential services. To support with financing for this effort, the
39 legislature intends to look at creating a dedicated public housing
40 account, which may be capitalized through legislative appropriations,

1 dedicated revenue streams or other means and, if authorized,
2 financing from a publicly owned depository bank.

3 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) The task force on public housing is
4 established. The task force shall look at using a public housing
5 paradigm as a means of meeting housing demand for the future and
6 shall look at leveraging publicly constructed, owned, and operated
7 mixed-income housing. The task force shall provide recommendations to
8 the legislature regarding mixed-income housing in the state of
9 Washington.

10 (2) The task force must review and consider, at minimum, the
11 following:

12 (a) Future funding mechanisms that could be used towards
13 development of mixed-income housing and the extent to which this
14 funding is already used for this purpose;

15 (b) Alternative funding strategies that could be used to fund
16 publicly owned mixed-use housing, which should include but is not
17 limited to reviewing other state programs which publicly fund
18 development and whether use of a state housing authority, or similar
19 entity created to address the housing issue as a coordinated
20 statewide issue, to borrow funds from a Washington state publicly
21 owned depository bank could be beneficial;

22 (c) Review of the land inventory conducted by state agencies and
23 other available public lands to determine if those lands could be
24 used for the purpose of publicly owned housing development and
25 whether use of a state land bank or similar structure could
26 facilitate development of affordable housing;

27 (d) Review the United Nations human rights office of the high
28 commissioner's definition of housing adequacy and develop a strategic
29 plan to create livable communities for all Washingtonians to thrive,
30 including sufficient publicly owned housing supply to offset demand;
31 and

32 (e) Structural governance changes and financing changes that may
33 be necessary to the state's housing strategy to address the housing
34 crisis on a statewide basis, such as a statewide housing authority.

35 (3) The task force shall provide a preliminary report on its
36 findings under subsection (2) of this section to the legislature by
37 July 1, 2026, and provide a final report by November 1, 2026, that
38 includes recommendations to the legislature regarding:

1 (a) How to restructure public housing development to address
2 affordability at all income levels but especially for homeless
3 persons and residents that are at or below 200 percent of the area
4 median income;

5 (b) Strategies to implement public housing to increase
6 affordability of housing units including separating values of land
7 from the improvements on the land in public housing projects for
8 possible sale of individual units to help with overall construction
9 and maintenance costs; and

10 (c) Strategies to create whole livable communities using public
11 housing as the anchor strategy with all necessary amenities required
12 for healthy communities including but not limited to classroom and
13 child care spaces, shopping stores for grocery and household needs,
14 small business spaces, open spaces, walkability, primary health care
15 facilities, and accessibility to high-speed transit and jobs.

16 (4) The task force shall consist of the following members:

17 (a) One member from each of the two largest caucuses of the
18 senate, appointed by the president of the senate;

19 (b) One member from each of the two largest caucuses of the house
20 of representatives, appointed by the speaker of the house;

21 (c) The lieutenant governor or the lieutenant governor's
22 designee;

23 (d) The director of the department of commerce or the director's
24 designee;

25 (e) One representative from the Washington state housing finance
26 commission;

27 (f) One representative from each ethnic commission, as defined in
28 RCW 44.28.005, appointed by the director of each respective
29 commission;

30 (g) The director of the governor's office of Indian affairs, or
31 the director's designee; and

32 (h) The following members appointed jointly by the president of
33 the senate and the speaker of the house of representatives:

34 (i) A representative of a builders association;

35 (ii) A representative of architects;

36 (iii) An organization representing the nonprofit housing
37 development industry;

38 (iv) Two representatives from public housing authorities created
39 under chapter 35.82 RCW, with one representative from east of the

1 crest of the Cascade mountains and one representative from west of
2 the crest of the Cascade mountains;

3 (v) Two representatives of the association of Washington cities,
4 with one representative from a city that is located east of the crest
5 of the Cascade mountains and one representative from a city that is
6 located west of the crest of the Cascade mountains; and

7 (vi) At least three individuals from underrepresented populations
8 who have direct lived experience with housing instability.

9 (5) The department of commerce must administer and provide staff
10 support for the task force. The department of commerce may work with
11 the task force to determine appropriate subcommittees as needed.

12 (6) The task force must hold its first meeting within 45 days of
13 final appointments to the task force and must meet at least twice
14 each year thereafter. The task force must submit reports to the
15 governor and the appropriate committees of the legislature detailing
16 its findings and recommendations. Meeting summaries must be posted to
17 the website of the department of commerce within 30 days of any
18 meeting by the task force.

19 (7) Legislative members of the task force shall be reimbursed for
20 travel expenses in accordance with RCW 44.04.120. Nonlegislative
21 members are not entitled to be reimbursed for travel expenses if they
22 are elected officials or are participating on behalf of an employer,
23 governmental entity, or other organization. Any reimbursement for
24 other nonlegislative members is subject to chapter 43.03 RCW.

25 (8) To ensure that the task force has diverse and inclusive
26 representation of those affected by its work, task force members,
27 including subcommittee members, whose participation in the task force
28 may be hampered by financial hardship may be compensated as provided
29 in RCW 43.03.220.

30 (9) This section expires June 30, 2027.

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