
Local Government Committee

HB 2945

Brief Description: Establishing a legislative task force to review the growth management act.

Sponsors: Representatives Appleton and Moscoso.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates the Legislative Task Force on the Growth Management Act (GMA Task Force) to review the Growth Management Act (GMA) and provide recommendations, if any, for modifications of the GMA that will help ensure that Washington's land use practices align with the needs of current and future residents of the state.
- Provides for the GMA Task Force's membership, expenses, and staff support, and requires a report to the Legislature by November 1, 2016.

Hearing Date: 2/3/16

Staff: Michaela Murdock (786-7289).

Background:

Growth Management Act – Introduction.

The Growth Management Act (GMA) is the comprehensive land use planning framework for counties and cities in Washington. Originally enacted in 1990 and 1991, the GMA establishes land use designation and environmental protection requirements for all Washington counties and cities.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 29 counties, and the cities within those counties, that are obligated to satisfy all planning requirements of the GMA.

The GMA directs jurisdictions that fully plan under the GMA to adopt internally consistent comprehensive land use plans that are generalized, coordinated land use policy statements of the governing body. Comprehensive plans are implemented through locally adopted development regulations, both of which are subject to review and revision requirements prescribed in the GMA.

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

Prior Reviews of Growth Management Policies.

Since the GMA was enacted, at least three commissions or task forces have been directed by the Governor or the Legislature to review the state's land use and growth management policies and laws, and make recommendations regarding the GMA:

- The Growth Strategies Commission (1989 -90);
- The Governor's Task Force on Regulatory Reform (1993-94); and
- The Land Use Study Commission (1995-98).

The Growth Strategies Commission, created by executive order in August 1989, reviewed and made recommendations regarding land use and growth management issues. The commission included 13 citizens and four legislators, and was divided into subcommittees to study different topic areas and prepare issue papers on those topics. The subcommittees conducted meetings throughout the state to gather information and meet with stakeholders and community representatives. Recommendations were prepared in consultation with representatives of cities, counties, and state government. The commission submitted preliminary and final reports in July and September 1990.

The Governor's Task Force on Regulatory Reform, created by executive order in August 1993, was charged with simplifying the state's rules and regulations, including developing recommendations regarding growth management processes and environmental review requirements. The task force was comprised of 21 members, who were divided into three subcommittees to work on specific issues and develop recommendations. The task force solicited public comment, held hearings, and invited experts and stakeholders to present information. Preliminary and final reports with recommendations were submitted to the Legislature in December 1993 and December 1994.

The Land Use Study Commission was established by the Legislature in 1995. The commission was directed to consider the effectiveness of state and local government efforts to consolidate and integrate the GMA, the State Environmental Policy Act, the Shoreline Management Act, and other land use, planning, environmental, and permitting laws. The commission was comprised of 14 members. It held monthly meetings, solicited public comment, developed recommendations for the Legislature, submitted annual reports and, in December 1998, submitted a final report.

Summary of Bill:

A Legislative Task Force on the Growth Management Act (GMA Task Force) is established to review the GMA and provide recommendations, if any, for modification of the GMA that will help ensure that Washington's land use practices align with the needs of current and future residents of the state. In conducting its review, the GMA Task Force may consider issues including land management, school siting, short line railroads, economic development, and other issues identified by the GMA Task Force.

The GMA Task Force must have 16 members as follows:

- two members from each of the two largest caucuses of the Senate, appointed by the President of the Senate;

- two members from each of the two largest caucuses of the House of Representatives, appointed by the speaker of the House;
- eight members appointed by the Governor who represent: environmental concerns; the building industry; property owners; buyers and sellers of real property; rural economic interests in eastern and western Washington; and urban economic interests in eastern and western Washington;
- two members who are elected members of the legislative bodies of cities or towns or mayors of cities or towns in eastern and western Washington, appointed by an association representing Washington cities; and
- two members who are elected members of county legislative bodies or elected executives of counties in eastern and western Washington, appointed by an association representing Washington counties.

Provision is made for the payment of member expenses and staff support. The GMA Task Force is required to convene three times, and to submit a report to the appropriate committees of the Legislature by November 1, 2016.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.