

Weekly Legislative Update: **Growth Management**

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Before the legislative session began, there were not a lot of prefiled bills. However, the number is increasing, and the bills are significant. One relates to housing density and would make a big change in the requirements for single family neighborhoods. Another relates to adding climate change resiliency and mitigation to comprehensive plans. Both of these were prominent issues in the 2022 legislative session and promise to remain controversial this year.

It is notable that this year, the House of Representatives established a Housing Committee. Previously, housing has been included with local government more broadly. Most housing issues will be described in the Update on Housing and Homelessness, but the amendments to the Growth Management Act (GMA) will be covered here.

In this past first week of the Legislature, none of the housing-related bills addressed amendments to the GMA; but in the week ahead, two GMA amendments will be considered. See the alerts below for HB 1110 and HB 1133.

Bills Needing Action This Week

Please read Bills We Support to see the latest status of other bills.

Sign in “Pro” for the following bills this week:

You may express support for bills in hearings with the online process. Remember, only authorized members can speak for the League; the Issue Chairs will do that, so please leave the “Organization” box blank. A more powerful influence is many voices speaking for themselves rather than many voices speaking for the League.

[HB 1110/SB 5190](#) Increasing middle housing in areas traditionally dedicated to single-family detached housing. Please sign in **PRO [here](#) for HB 1110 before 3:00 pm on January 17.**

The League has supported increased density for environmental, climate change and housing affordability reasons. However, increased density in single family residential areas has been controversial in most jurisdictions. This bill is intended to address all of those factors by removing provisions for single housing units per lot and adding requirements specific to areas near major transit stops. This is controversial among even League members, who fear inappropriate development, and amendments will be proposed to address those concerns. However, it is important to support the concept behind this proposal.

SB 5190 was heard in the Senate Local Government, Land Use & Tribal Affairs on January 9 and the executive session in that committee on February 12 resulted in the bill being referred to the Housing Committee without recommendation (by the Local Government Committee).

[HB 1133](#) Establishing limitations on detached accessory dwelling units outside urban growth areas.

Please sign in PRO [here](#) before 3:00 pm on January 17.

ADUs, or accessory dwelling units, are often utilized as a way to increase housing density and provide smaller residential units for people who do not need a large home. This bill would add a restriction to the GMA on addition of ADUs in rural areas to assure that they are not developed as a way of significantly increasing housing in rural areas. The League supports preservation of rural lands.

[HB 1167](#) Relating to residential housing regulations. **Please sign in PRO [here](#) before 7:00 am on January 19.**

This bill would add a new section to the GMA to provide direct financial assistance to counties and cities for the adoption of preapproved middle housing plans and would amend other regulations in support of these plans.

[HB 1181](#) Improving the state's response to climate change by updating the state's planning framework. **Please sign in PRO [here](#) before 9:30 am on January 17.**

[SB 5203](#) Companion bill to HB 1181. **Please sign in PRO [here](#) before 7:00 am on January 17.**

These bills would amend the GMA to add reduction of greenhouse gas emissions to the transportation goals, add participation of vulnerable populations to the citizen participation goals, and add a new goal of climate change and resiliency with an extensive section in the bill directing how comp plans will address this. A number of other changes in comp plan requirements are included, such as reduction of wildfire risk and reduction of vehicle miles traveled to the land use sections; green infrastructure to capital facilities planning; components related to a variety of utilities; and emphasize transit and multi-modal transportation in urban and urban growth areas.

Email your Legislators to support these bills:

[Click here](#) to email any/all of your legislators, letting them know these bills are important to their constituents. HB ("House Bill") to Representatives, SB ("Senate Bill") to your Senator.

Bills We Support

Other bills will be added in next week's update.

How You Can Be Involved

- Respond to Action Alerts in the legislative newsletter. These will primarily appear in the section of the newsletter related to growth management.
- Contact Cynthia Stewart, cstewart@lwwva.org, to receive additional information.