

Weekly Legislative Update: **Housing/Homelessness**

Issue Team Chair: Cynthia Stewart

Contact: cstewart@lwvwa.org

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Overview

One of the most significant priority bills of this session for the issue of Housing & Homelessness is the rent stabilization bill, HB 2114. **Please use the Action Alert** at the top of this newsletter to ask the Senate Ways & Means Committee to move that bill out of committee with a Do Pass recommendation. There is only one day left to get this critical bill moving toward passage by the full Senate.

Bills That Passed the Chamber of Origin

There are a number of bills listed below for which executive session action on Monday, February 26, will be critical.

HB 1012 Addressing the response to extreme weather events would require the Military Department to develop and implement an Extreme Weather Response Grant Program for the purpose of assisting with the costs of responding to community needs during periods of extremely hot or cold weather, or severe poor air quality due to wildfire smoke. It would help keep unhoused people from dying because of exposure. **This bill passed the House on a vote of 68 to 30. It had a public hearing by the Senate Ways & Means Committee and needs to be moved forward in the Ways & Means executive session on Monday, February 26.**

HB 1890 Relating to housing authorities, would allow legislative authorities that have created housing authorities prior to June 5, 2024 to form a joint housing authority composed of city governments without county authorization. **This bill passed the House with a vote of 97 to 0 with 1 excused. It is in the Senate Rules Committee now.**

HB 1892 Concerning the workforce housing accelerator program. This bill, with 41 sponsors, would establish a program within the Department of Commerce (DOC) under which loans may be issued to eligible organizations to assist with the development of housing for low-income households. **This bill passed the House with a vote of 97 to 0, with 1 excused. It had a public hearing in the Senate Ways & Means Committee and has to be moved forward in that committee's executive session on Monday, February 26.**

HB 1998/SB 5901 Concerning co-living housing. This bill would authorize shared housing where residents each have their own bedroom and share living and kitchen space, in any area where

multi-family housing is permitted. This type of housing, formerly considered “boarding houses”, has been prohibited in many jurisdictions but could offer lower cost housing for those who need it. **SB 5901** died in the Senate Rules Committee. **HB 1998** passed the House of Representatives with a vote of 96 to 0, with 2 excused and passed the Senate with a vote of 44 to 4. Because there were additional amendments in the Senate, it will be negotiated by a conference committee and presented as a final bill to both House and Senate before March 7.

HB 2114 Improving housing stability for tenants subject to the residential landlord-tenant act and the manufactured/mobile home landlord-tenant act. (Called the Rent Stabilization Bill) This bill would limit rent and fee increases, require notice of rent and fee increases, limit fees and deposits, establish a landlord resource center and associated services, authorize tenant lease termination, create parity between lease types, and provide for attorney general enforcement. **HB 2114** passed the House on a vote of 54 to 43. It had a public hearing in the Senate Ways & Means Committee and must be passed from that committee by the end of the day Monday, February 26.

HB 2160 Promoting community and transit-oriented housing development. These bills would make a number of changes to regulatory requirements to facilitate more development of multi-family housing near transit facilities. **This bill passed the House with a vote of 56 to 40. It is scheduled for public hearing in the Senate Ways & Means Committee on Saturday, February 24.**

HB 2270 Creating a Washington state department of housing. This bill, which has 48 co-sponsors, would direct the Office of Financial Management to contract for a study to help facilitate the transition of state housing programs to a new state agency and identify gaps in current state housing programs. This would recognize the importance of housing in this period when it is so limited. **This bill passed the House with a vote of 53 to 39. It had a public hearing in the Senate Ways & Means Committee and must be passed from that committee by the end of the day on Monday, February 26.**

SB 5334 Providing a local government option for the funding of essential affordable housing programs would allow the legislative authority of a county or city to impose an excise tax on the sale of lodging of short-term rentals with revenue from the tax used for the operation and capital costs of affordable housing programs and authorize counties and cities to offer exemptions from the tax in certain circumstances. **This bill passed the Senate with a vote of 29 to 20. It is scheduled for executive session in the House Finance Committee on Monday, February 26.**

SB 6015 Concerning residential parking configurations would reduce parking requirements in certain types of housing areas. The intention is to encourage use of transit. **This bill passed the Senate with a vote of 30 to 19. It is now in the House Rules Committee.**

SB 6173 Relating to affordable and supportive housing sales and use taxes and encouraging investments in affordable homeownership unit development would allow revenue from the affordable and supportive housing sales and use tax to be used for housing and services provided to persons whose income is at or below 80 percent of the median income if it is supporting the development of affordable housing intended for owner occupancy. **This bill passed the Senate with a vote of 48 to 1. It is scheduled for executive session in the House Finance Committee on Monday, February 26.**

SB 6175 Concerning housing affordability tax incentives for existing structures would allow a city to establish a retail sales and use tax deferral program for conversion of underutilized commercial property to affordable housing. **This bill passed the Senate on a vote of 48 to 1. It has been amended, and that amended bill is scheduled for executive session in the House Finance Committee on Monday, February 26.**

Bills We Are Watching

HB 2276/SB 6191 Increasing the supply of affordable and workforce housing. This bill would establish new permanent funding for affordable housing. It would:

- Increase the "ceiling" for the Tier 1 1.1 percent state real estate excise (REET) from \$525,000 to \$750,000 beginning January 1, 2025
- Impose a new Real Estate Transfer tax (RETT) of 1% on the value of the selling price over \$3.025 million
- Direct the RETT revenue to be divided between accounts currently receiving REET moneys and the Washington Housing Trust Fund, Apple Health and Homes Account, the Affordable Housing for All Account, the new Developmental Disabilities Housing and Services Account, and the new Housing Stability Account.
- Create a REET exemption for certain sales or transfers of properties that qualify for a property tax exemption that will be used for a community purpose.

New in 2024, **HB 2276**, with 40 co-sponsors, had a public hearing on January 18 in the House Finance Committee and **executive session on February 23 in that committee. The outcome of the executive session has not yet been posted.** **SB 6191** had a public hearing on January 25 in the Senate Ways & Means Committee but was scheduled for executive session and therefore has died.

Bills that have Died

HB 2008 Creating a task force on housing cost driver analysis. This bill would create a task force to ascertain the primary factors driving housing costs in Washington. It passed the House Housing Committee as a substitute bill and has been referred to the House Appropriations Committee. It did not get a public hearing in that committee so has died.

HB 2234 Concerning energy assistance for low-income households. This bill would require all electric utilities to provide one or more programs and funding available for energy assistance to low-income households. It had a public hearing in the House Environment & Energy Committee but did not move out of that committee by the cutoff on January 31 so has died.

HB 2457 Concerning emergency housing for domestic violence survivors. This bill would support victims of domestic violence, many of whom have challenges finding housing, by creating a Domestic Violence Emergency Housing Voucher Program to assist in obtaining stable housing for people fleeing from intimate partner violence; directing the Department of Commerce to establish a grant program to acquire or renovate housing units for emergency housing for individuals who are at risk from intimate partner violence; and creating a task force to propose recommendations to increase the supply of short-term housing for survivors fleeing intimate partner violence. The bill has a public hearing on January 29 in the House Housing Committee but was not passed out of that committee by the cutoff on January 31 so has died.

HB 2464 Concerning the development of new manufactured/mobile homes and new manufactured/mobile home communities. This bill would allow development of manufactured/mobile home communities in rural areas. While additional manufactured/mobile homes would increase the supply of affordable homes, these should not be encouraged as community developments outside the urban growth areas. This bill died in the House Rules Committee.

HB 2474 Concerning compliance with siting requirements for transitional housing, permanent supportive housing, indoor emergency shelters, and indoor emergency housing. This bill would put the State Department of Commerce in a role of monitoring how local jurisdictions permit transitional housing, permanent supportive housing, indoor emergency shelters, or indoor emergency housing. It would authorize Commerce to develop all zoning regulations for any zone within a city that allows residential housing units or hotels until a city ordinance found in violation of housing statutes is amended. Is in the House Rules Committee. **This bill passed the House on a vote of 55 to 42 but died in the Senate because it was not passed by the Senate Local Government, Land Use & Tribal Affairs Committee.**

SB 5975 Authorizing use of the housing trust fund and other legislative appropriations to finance social housing. This bill would establish a program with the housing trust fund for housing on land that is publicly owned in perpetuity and available to households of any income level, including low-income and moderate-income households. This bill had a public hearing in the Senate Housing Committee but never had an executive session so it died in committee.

SB 5961 the Rent Stabilization Bill (companion bill to HB 2114) was not passed out of the Senate Housing Committee by the cutoff of January 31 so has died.

SB 6024 Promoting community and transit-oriented housing development (companion bill to HB 2160), had a public hearing in the Senate Local Government, Land Use & Tribal Affairs

Committee but was not passed out of committee by the January 31 cutoff so has died.

Resource Information

The League belongs to a coalition, the WA Low Income Housing Alliance (WLIHA). Read more about housing issues at their website [here](#).

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 transportation.
- Contact [Cynthia Stewart](#), Housing and Homelessness Issue Chair, to receive additional information.