

Weekly Legislative Update: **Housing/Homelessness**

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January 28, 2024

Bills Needing Action This Week

*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 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 Committee on Housing and executive session on January 30.

⚠ Please sign in PRO here by Monday, January 29, before 12:30 PM.

Overview

This supplemental short session will not generate as much legislation as last year related to housing, but key legislators have indicated that they want to keep the momentum up to address the housing problems and homelessness crisis.

The Governor's supplemental budget included a great deal of additional funding for affordable housing, including nearly \$107 million for capital, including land trusts; \$24 million for supportive programs; and \$10 million for the right of way initiative to move unhoused campers from highway rights of way.

Legislators have additional policy proposals, including those listed below. The status of most of these is uncertain because they have not yet been scheduled for executive session. Given that the cut-off for bills in policy committees of the house of origin is next week, January 31; and the cut-off for fiscal committees is February 5, some of these are at risk.

Bills We Are Following

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. It passed the House Housing Committee as a substitute and had a public hearing on January 25 in the House Capital Budget Committee. It is scheduled for executive session on February 1.

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. **HB 1998** passed out of the House Housing Committee as a substitute bill and has now been referred to the House Rules Committee. **SB 5901** has passed the Local Government, Land Use and Tribal Affairs Committee on January 25 and has been referred to the Senate Rules Committee.

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 has not had a public hearing in that committee.

HB 2114/SB 5961 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 Housing Committee on January 16 and has been referred to the House Appropriations Committee, where it had a public hearing but has not been scheduled for executive session yet. **SB 5961** had a public hearing and has been considered in executive session but the outcome has not yet been posted.

HB 2160/SB 6024 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. **HB 2160** passed the House Housing Committee as a substitute and has been referred to the House Capital Budget Committee, where it had a public hearing on Thursday, January 25. It has not yet been scheduled for executive session. **SB 6024** had a public hearing in the Senate Local Government, Land Use & Tribal Affairs Committee on January 11 but has not been scheduled for executive session.

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 on January 18 and was scheduled for executive session on January 25, but no action was taken at that time.

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. The bill had a public hearing on January 23 and is scheduled for executive session on January 29.

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 but has not yet been scheduled for executive session. **SB 6191** had a public hearing on January 25 in the Senate Ways & Means Committee but has not been scheduled for executive session. Since both are in fiscal committees, they can still be considered up to February 5.

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 Committee on Housing and executive session on January 30.

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 on January 19 and is scheduled for executive session on January 31.

Bills We Are Watching

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. This bill is scheduled for public hearing in the House Housing Committee on January 29 and executive session on January 30.

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 is scheduled for public hearing in the House Housing Committee on January 29 and executive session on January 30.

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.