

Weekly Legislative Update: **Housing/Homelessness**

Issue Team Chair: Cynthia Stewart

Contact: cstewart@lwvwa.org

February 11, 2024

Overview

Some bills have been moving to passage through floor votes in the House and Senate; others have not. The bills listed below as having passed the chamber of origin are those that passed as of Friday, February 9. The list cannot address those that may get passed by the House or Senate over the weekend, because of this newsletter's production schedule.


Next week, as of Wednesday, February 14, committees will begin holding hearings and discussions on bills that were passed by the opposite chamber.

Bills That Passed the Chamber of Origin

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 has now been scheduled for public hearing in the Senate Housing Committee on February 14, 10:30 AM.

 **Sign in PRO here** before 9:30 AM on Wednesday, February 14.


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. This bill has now been scheduled for public hearing in the Senate Housing Committee on February 14, 10:30 AM.

 **Sign in PRO here** before 9:30 AM on Wednesday, February 14.


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** the House of Representatives with a vote of 96 to 0, with 2 excused and has been referred to the Senate Local Government, Land Use & Tribal Affairs Committee.

SB 5901 is in the Senate Rules Committee for second hearing.

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 and is now scheduled for public hearing in the House Local Government Committee at 8:00 AM, February 14.

 [Sign in PRO here](#) before 7:00 AM, Wednesday, February 14.

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 and will have a public hearing in the House Local Government Committee at 8:00 AM on February 14.

 [Sign in PRO here](#) before 7:00 AM, Wednesday, February 14.

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 has not yet been scheduled for public hearing in the House.

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 not yet been scheduled for public hearing in the House.

Other Bills We Are Following

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** is in the House Rules Committee for second reading and may get a vote before the February 13 cutoff.

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. **HB 2160** has been referred to the House Rules Committee but not pulled for a vote yet as of this writing.

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 is in the House Rules Committee for second reading.

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. Is in the House Rules Committee.

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 now in the House Rules Committee.

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 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 been scheduled for executive session and therefore has died. **SB 6191** had a public hearing on January 25 in the Senate Ways & Means Committee but was not been scheduled for executive session and therefore has also 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.

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, companion bill to HB 2114, the rent stabilization bill, was not passed out of the Senate Housing Committee by the cutoff of January 31 so has died.

SB 6024, companion bill to HB 2160, Promoting community and transit-oriented housing development, 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 *(cont'd, next page)*

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.