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Governor Jay Inslee signs legislation to end exclusionary housing policies in Washington

OLYMPIA – On May 12th, 2021, Governor Jay Inslee signed HB 1220, an update to the state Growth Management Act, which will ensure that cities are planning for housing affordable to people at all income levels, that cities redress the impacts from historic racist housing policies, and that cities allow homeless housing and shelters in zones where other types of housing and lodging is permitted.

Representatives Strom Peterson (D-Edmonds) and Nicole Macri (D-Seattle) introduced the legislation in the state House and Senator Kuderer and Senator Das championed the legislation in the Senate.

In the last decade, population growth in Washington has boomed, but housing supply has lagged far behind. A recent report found that between 2000-2015, Washington fell 225,000 units short of meeting its housing needs.¹ Nearly every community in Washington, from small rural towns to our state’s biggest cities, is facing a housing affordability crisis.

HB 1220 will ensure that Washington communities are growing equitably and inclusively. Led by Futurewise, a statewide land use policy advocacy organization, a [broad coalition](#) of housing service providers, labor unions, grassroots supporters and local governments worked together to craft the legislation.

While the impacts of HB 1220 will be felt statewide, the bill has particular resonance in the Puget Sound metro region, where the city of Seattle has clashed with suburban cities on how to respond to the housing affordability and homelessness crisis. (See previous coverage by [the Seattle Times](#) and [Publicola](#)) Mayor Jenny Durkan of Seattle submitted a formal letter to the Senate Housing and Local Government Committee in favor of the legislation, while the Sound Cities Association submitted an earlier letter opposing the legislation. The final bill marks a compromise among stakeholders and retains its focus on ending exclusionary housing practices in city zoning.

Rep. Nicole Macri (D-Seattle), bill sponsor: “House Bill 1220 delivers on the simple premise that people should be able to live where people are able to live. Never in my 25 years working to reduce homelessness have I seen such a monumental policy aimed at expanding growth planning to include people of all income levels and with an eye towards racial justice and climate resiliency. When enacted, this law will have immediate, positive impacts in creating more inclusive and welcoming communities.”

Rep. Strom Peterson (D-Edmonds), bill sponsor: “Neither homelessness nor housing affordability and security will improve until our communities start planning for and building housing for people of all income levels—workforce, low to moderate income, extremely low income, and emergency shelter. We simply cannot repeat

¹ <https://www.upforgrowth.org/news/new-report-details-washingtons-225000-home-shortage>



the mistakes of exclusionary zoning from our past. Planning for and building housing with a focus on equity means housing for BIPOC and immigrant neighbors, stable families, and healthy communities.”

Quote: Alex Brennan, Futurewise ED: “HB 1220 is a crucial update to the Growth Management Act to align our planning policies with our values of racial equity and inclusivity. HB 1220 is a step toward righting the historic wrongs of racism and exclusion in our housing policies and will ensure that all people, especially our BIPOC, immigrant and low-income neighbors, have access to housing in every Washington community.”

Michele Thomas, Executive Director, Washington Low Income Housing Alliance: “HB 1220 will go a long way to prevent the outright discrimination, obstacles and barriers that slow down or prevent shelter and Permanent Supportive Housing which is the solution to long-term, unsheltered homelessness. This is a significant and urgent problem - as COVID-19 has laid bare, housing is literally a life-saver and every city in our state has to do their part to help end our homelessness crisis.”

