

*Land Use & Climate Change Advisory Committee*

## Background Information and Research for LUCC Potential Recommendation on Adding a New or Amended Goal to the Growth Management Act

---

The Technical Support Team (Tech Team) is tasked with providing information and research to the Land Use and Climate Change Advisory Committee (LUCC). Based on the ideas moving forward as potential recommendations from the LUCC, the Tech Team has conducted research and provides this preliminary information to the LUCC. To the best of their abilities the Tech Team has researched to provide information in response to the SB 6580 legislation and the LUCC Work Plan.

**1. What, if any, actions have been taken by local governments to address climate change related to this particular idea?**

Many local governments have decided to address climate change without it being specifically addressed in the current goals of the Growth Management Act (GMA).

**2. What, if any, computer modeling programs or other analytic and assessment tools are available to assist a local government in addressing this idea?**

Computer modeling programs that help local governments compare greenhouse gas emissions related to various land use and transportation plan scenarios would be beneficial during review and the decision-making process. To date, such models are not widely used at the comprehensive planning or sub-area planning levels.

Some of the most widely recognized modeling tools for this level of review include the Clean Air and Climate Protection (CACP) software through ICLEI Local Governments for Sustainability, and other area-wide modeling programs. The technical support team is working to provide a list of the available tools and their “place in the process” where the tool is most beneficial in its application (for example, comprehensive planning, sub-area planning, or project level review).

**3. What are the positive and negative impacts of a local government addressing this idea on:**

- a. Affordable housing**
- b. Employment**

- c. Transportation costs**
- d. Economic development**

This is a very challenging question to try to answer in this way. Answers would be dependent upon how the local governments choose to pursue the policy, rather than based on the policy itself. The technical team would appreciate guidance from LUCC members into where data may exist to help provide input into these topics.

The technical team will continue to look for analysis in these areas. The most promising data may come from California State. As California seems to be on a similar path and ahead of where we are, we may be able to find data on this topic related to our questions outlined above. The technical team will continue to search for relevant data.

**4. Please provide a general assessment of state and local resources needed, financial and otherwise, needed to fully implement the idea.**

A new goal would not necessarily require a local government to add a new element to their comprehensive plan or development regulations, although it is likely that some jurisdictions would choose to address a new goal in that manner. Some jurisdictions may rely on related goals and policies in their existing plans and development regulations to show they are meeting a new GMA goal. Some jurisdictions would revise existing goals and policies of their plans and development regulations to target climate change issues more specifically.

In 2007, SB 5871 was introduced at the legislature. The bill, which did not pass, would have required an energy element be added in the comprehensive plans of fully planning jurisdictions, as well as some related performance measures and monitoring. The fiscal note for the bill indicated that impacts to local governments could not be firmly estimated, however, Pacific County estimated costs at approximately \$100,000 plus \$20,000 upfront and a ½ FTE for the monitoring. The City of Olympia, which already has an energy element in their comprehensive plan, estimated costs to implement the bill at approximately \$20,000, plus approximately \$20,000 annually for the monitoring portion of that bill. While this example is not directly comparable to costs associated with a new or amended goal, it does show the range of costs that could be encountered by local governments, should they choose to address a new or amended goal in the GMA by adding an optional element in their comprehensive plan.

In general, it is assumed that this proposal would not generate additional legal challenges, appeals, or associated fiscal impacts, based on allegations that local governments had violated the GMA climate change goal. This is because the proposal adds a new goal to the GMA, but does not define specific requirements or new mandates that local governments would need to fulfill in order to meet the goal. Based on the decisions of the growth management hearings boards to date, challenges alleging a violation of the GMA goals generally must be brought together with a challenge alleging a violation of a specific requirement in the GMA governing the adoption or amendment of comprehensive plans and development regulations. On that basis,

it is assumed that a violation of the climate change goal would be alleged as part of a challenge to specific existing requirements of the GMA, rather than as a separate free-standing challenge that would not otherwise have been filed.

For the reasons above, it is difficult to assess the resources needed to fully implement the addition of the new goal to the GMA.