



February 7, 2023

The Honorable Liz Lovelett, Chair  
Local Government, Land Use & Tribal Affairs  
Committee  
Washington State Senate  
Olympia, WA

The Honorable Davina Duerr, Chair  
Local Government Committee  
Washington State House of Representatives  
Olympia, WA

Dear Chair Lovelett and Chair Duerr,

I am writing on behalf of the American Planning Association, Washington Chapter ([APA-WA](#)) to express **support for SB 5651 and companion HB 1723**. The 1,500 members of our chapter are planning professionals who advise elected and appointed officials on land use, housing, transportation, economic development, and environmental policy, enforce development regulations, administer the permit process, and inform and engage with communities.

SB 5651 and HB 1723 advance [APA-WA's 2023 legislative priorities](#) including: **adding an equity goal** into the Growth Management Act (GMA) that incorporates an equity lens to other goals; **acting immediately on climate** resilience and sustainability by addressing community engagement and empowerment; and **providing funding for essential planning**. These bills would help to realize the idea that effective planning can work to both increase diverse public participation and create greater social fairness.

Our members have identified the following recommended clarifications and revisions to these bills:

- Section 3 adds a required equity element to comprehensive plans that would work to reduce environmental harm, increase environmental benefits and reduce health disparities. This element would also promote public participation in decision-making by vulnerable populations and overburdened communities. These new initiatives will require time and effort for planners throughout the state to get right; we suggest that appropriate levels of funding be included in state operating budgets .
- Section 4 requires that the Department of Commerce prepare and disseminate best practices to achieve equitable and inclusive public participation to engage members of the public who have been historically underrepresented and underserved. Commerce will also need resources to support this effort.
- As part of the preparation of the best practices we suggest that Commerce include development of a model element and provide example policies to guide siting decisions, permitting processes, and resource allocations, regulatory approaches, and monitoring and analysis frameworks from a range of sources to assist jurisdictions in preparation of their comprehensive plans.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,



Yorik Stevens-Wajda, AICP  
President, Washington Chapter of the American Planning Association