



Washington State Senate

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Clark County Planning Commission
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RE: ESB 5517, Freight Rail Dependent Uses Comp Plan Change and Overlay Map

Dear Planning Commissioners:

Thank you for your continued work to implement ESB 5517, the legislation I sponsored to allow freight rail dependent uses for agricultural, forest and mineral land in Clark County that is adjacent to the Chelatchie Prairie Railroad.

I applaud the County and the Planning Commission for acknowledging the intent of the legislation to allow economic development near rail lines and expediting Comp Plan and Overlay Map changes in this docket cycle to become effective on January 1, 2018.

During the legislative process, the struggle over the development of the Rural Industrial Land Bank, the need for rail served land and the thousands of jobs it could bring was the primary reason why ESB 5517 was passed to include Clark County. Unfortunately, the current Comp Plan and Overlay Map proposal includes only part of the Land Bank and excludes a portion that is undergoing additional appeal and legal challenge over its Light Industrial designation.

Commissioners should consider enhancing the proposed Comp Plan and Overlay Map to include the entire Rural Industrial Land Bank. This will protect against an uncertain legal outcome, puts the public on notice that the land is intended for industrial use and is consistent with the goals of the legislation and the legislative public record.

Clark County is one of the fastest growing counties in Washington, having grown nearly 11% in population since 2010. There is an expectation of population reaching a half million people by 2035, representing growth of 32% since 2010. We need to ensure there is adequate freight rail dependent land available and be supportive of that growth. Clark County has the chance to pioneer through this new land opportunity and be a leader for other counties in our state with the same land use abilities. Reducing risk and showing we can accomplish this in a very timely fashion will reap great rewards for both Clark County and Washington state in the near future.

The time and effort by county officials, staff and stakeholders is greatly appreciated to make the implementation of ESB 5517 a reality. The suggested improvements will ensure the greatest opportunity for Clark County to recruit employers and jobs that make use of its shortline railroad.

Sincerely,

Senator Lynda Wilson
17th Legislative District