



Affordable housing

Overview

While not a traditional hospitality issue, the Legislature will focus significantly on housing and homelessness this year, and here's what discussions will center on.

The Democrats have continued to emphasize their policy focus on three key areas:

- Supply
- Stability
- Subsidy

With an estimated 1.1 million homes needed in Washington by 2044 according to the Department of Commerce, the issue of housing supply policy is going to be central again this year.

We expect to see legislation related to spurring additional construction of dense housing options near transit, known as transit-oriented development.

This idea has stalled in recent years due to affordability mandates placed in the bill that are unattainable according to developers.

When the Democrats reference stability as a primary focus, they mean rent control or rent stabilization. This concept has been introduced multiple times in recent years.

- Newly elected Senate Majority Leader, Jaime Pedersen has said repeatedly that the new makeup of the Senate Democratic Caucus likely supports rent control, and he expects it to pass this year.
- Housing developers continue to criticize the idea of rent control or rent stabilization as dampening supply at a time when Washington needs it most.

- This year’s proposal, [House Bill 1217](#) will:
 - Place a cap on rent increases to 7% annually for existing tenants. When a tenant leaves the unit, the landlord would be allowed to reset.
 - Exempts new construction for the first 10 years.
 - Exempts nonprofit-owned housing.
 - Landlords who violate the cap could end up paying damages to tenants equal to three months of the unlawful rent and fees charged, plus legal costs.

Lawmakers have continued to invest heavily to subsidize the construction of affordable housing units and even in a budget crisis, we expect that trend to continue.

Over the last several years, through the capital budget, Washington lawmakers have invested more than half a billion dollars in the Housing Trust Fund to build affordable housing units. These funds are available for non-profit housing developers to access through grants from the Department of Commerce.

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