



SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 8212

PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

Note: The ballot title and explanatory statement were written by the Attorney General as required by law. The complete text of Senate Joint Resolution 8212 begins on page 27.

Vote cast by the 1990 Legislature on final passage:

HOUSE: Yeas, 92; Nays, 2; Absent or not voting, 4.

SENATE: Yeas, 46; Nays, 0; Absent or not voting, 3.

Statement for

WHAT IS "CURRENT USE VALUATION" FOR LOW-INCOME HOUSING?

In 1967, the voters of the State of Washington passed a constitutional amendment to protect certain open space, farmlands and natural habitat by taxing it at its "current use". Under this proposed constitutional amendment, as with the open space program, certain privately-owned low-income housing would be eligible for a lower tax rate if the owners dedicated the property for continued low-income housing for a period of ten years. The lower rate is determined by taxing the land at its "current use" (actual low-income housing) rather than its "highest and best use" (potential office tower or shopping mall).

This constitutional amendment would help protect our rapidly dwindling supply of low-income housing and low-income mobile home parks. Dislocation and relocation of low-income families, usually from urban areas, drives people to living on the streets or in shelters, increases need for density in suburban areas and strains the budgets of local governments, housing authorities and non-profit agencies to provide decent and safe housing.

WHO SUPPORTS "CURRENT USE VALUATION" FOR LOW-INCOME HOUSING?

The Association of Washington Cities, labor, business leaders, church groups and a large bi-partisan demonstration of support helped pass this proposal, almost unanimously, through the legislature. Preservation of existing low-income housing is far less expensive and disruptive than building replacement housing. We have already lost far too many units due to land speculation and the pressures of high

Official Ballot Title:

Shall a constitutional amendment permit basing the tax value of low-income housing of five or more units upon current use?

The law as it now exists:

The Washington State Constitution provides that all taxes shall be uniform on the same class of property and that all real estate shall constitute one class of property. Property is directed to be valued for tax purposes on the basis of its true and fair value

taxation. "Current use" helps protect low-income housing, preserves neighborhoods and reduces the cost to taxpayers to provide replacement housing.

Rebuttal of Statement against

The argument against SJR 8212 by Representative Holland asserts that this act is flawed because it doesn't solve *all* property tax problems or *all* issues relating to low-income housing. To follow that logic would be to say that "no low-income housing should be built until we provide housing for all low-income families." 147 of the 149 Washington State legislators rejected that line of reasoning and voted for this measure; we hope you will also!

For further information you may call: (206) 548-8369

Voters Pamphlet Statement Prepared by:

ELEANOR LEE, State Senator; CLYDE BALLARD, State Representative; BUSSE NUTLEY, State Representative.

Advisory Committee: WANDA HAAS, President, League of Women Voters of Washington; CLYDE HUPP, Secretary/Treasurer, Pierce County Central Labor Council, AFL-CIO; EVAN IVERSON, President, Washington State Senior Citizens' Lobby; NORM RICE, Mayor, City of Seattle; DAVID SABEY, Chief Executive Officer, Sabey Corporation.

which value is not limited to current use. In 1967 the State Constitution was amended to permit the Legislature to authorize farms, agricultural lands, standing timber, timber lands, and open space used for recreational or scenic purposes to be valued, for tax purposes, on the basis of current use rather than true and fair value.

The effect of SJR 8212, if approved into law:

This measure would amend the State Constitution to expand the list of lands which can qualify, under the 1967 constitutional amendment, to be valued for tax purposes based upon current use. This amendment would permit the Legislature to provide on such conditions that it may enact that property devoted to low-income housing, consisting of five or more dwelling units which comply with health and safety standards, could be valued for property tax purposes based on the current use of the property.

Statement against

An increasing need for low-income housing is being caused by various trends. These include smaller households, an increase in both low-income households and residents with special needs, and reductions in Federal housing funds. Perhaps most importantly, incomes in many parts of Washington have not kept pace with housing prices.

SJR 8212 addresses only a small part of the problem, rental units in buildings of five housing units or more. It addresses neither rental units in smaller buildings or single family homes. Therefore, SJR 8212 is incomplete and should not be supported until a comprehensive approach is developed.

Such an approach should include improved land use planning, better designs to reduce housing development costs, and an on-going revenue source for low-income housing needs. Further, the Legislature and many local governments do budget monies for low-income housing. This "budget" approach is superior to the proposed tax exemption because budgets receive periodic review.

Part of the solution may be to change Washington's property tax assessment process. The current system of valuing property at its highest and best use forces property to be converted from low-income housing to other uses. In Seattle, 14,000 low-income housing units have been lost in the past 25 years. A change could assess property at its last sales price plus inflation and accomplish the same purpose as SJR 8212 and more, much more.

I urge you to reject SJR 8212, not because we don't need more assistance for low-income housing, but because it is not part of a more comprehensive solution.

Rebuttal of Statement for

It is unfortunate that the supporters of this resolution are willing to settle for such a narrow approach to such a large problem. Your no vote will assure the development of a more comprehensive solution.

Voters Pamphlet Statement Prepared by:
BRUCE HOLLAND, State Representative.

786-7718

or interest on general obligation bonds outstanding on December 6, 1934; or for the purpose of preventing the impairment of the obligation of a contract when ordered so to do by a court of last resort.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the secretary of state shall cause notice of the foregoing constitutional amendment to be published at least four times during the four weeks next preceding the election in every legal newspaper in the state.



**COMPLETE TEXT OF
Senate Joint
Resolution No. 8212**

THAT, At the next general election to be held in this state there shall be submitted to the qualified voters of the state for their approval and ratification, or rejection, an amendment to Article VII, section 11 of the Constitution of the state of Washington to read as follows:

Article VII, section 11. Nothing in this Article VII as amended shall prevent the legislature from providing, subject to such conditions as it may enact, that the true and fair value in money (a) of farms, agricultural lands, standing timber, and timberlands, ~~((and))~~ (b) of other open space lands ~~((which))~~ that are used for recreation or for enjoyment of their scenic or natural beauty, or (c) of properties with dwelling units that comply with health and safety standards, are devoted to low-income house, and contain five or more low-income dwelling units, shall be based on the use to which such property is currently applied, and such values shall be used in computing the assessed valuation of such property in the same manner as the assessed valuation is computed for all property.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the secretary of state shall cause notice of the foregoing constitutional amendment to be published at least four times during the four weeks next preceding the election in every legal newspaper in the state.

**(Explanatory statement for Initiative Measure 547
continued from page 5)**

wetlands, permit economic development consistent with land use goals, protection of water resources, Puget Sound, neighborhoods and property rights, and provide for citizen participation and other factors.

Within 6 months each county is to develop 10 and 20 year population, housing and employment goals. Counties and cities which are subject to the 1990 legislative requirement to develop comprehensive plans would have to do so within 3 years, other counties would have 5 or 7 years. Cities of over 150,000 must have sub-area plans. Sanctions are provided for non-compliance by local governments, including loss of certain local option taxes. Impact fees and excise taxes could be imposed by local governments on development activity for the impacts and potential impacts upon public facilities and housing relocation.

County boundary review boards would be authorized to prevent urban sprawl by denying cities annexations beyond an urban growth area. Extension of water and sewer services beyond urban growth areas is restricted. One, but not the sole, element to avoid platting requirements for the subdivision of land is minimum lot size. This minimum size would increase from 5 acres to 20 acres. The concept of a property owner having a vested right to a permissible land use would be changed to be viewed from the date of the issuance, rather than application date, of a valid permit and would lapse after one year if there was no change of position or substantial reliance.

The Department of Ecology would be restricted in its authority to preempt local requirements in granting a permit for facilities for the disposition of hazardous wastes. State agencies would be prohibited from permitting oil or gas exploration or drilling in marine waters. State agencies would be required to comply with the goals and elements of the Puget Sound Water Quality Management Plan.

An appropriation of 40 million dollars each biennium is called for by the Act. For the remainder of the current biennium 13.1 million dollars is provided of which 10 million is for grants to local governments.

VOTER'S CHECKLIST

Every Washington voter will have the opportunity to vote on four statewide measures at the state general election on November 6, 1990. The ballot titles for these measures are reproduced below as a convenience to voters in preparing to go to the polls or cast an absentee ballot. Voters are encouraged to bring any list or sample ballot to the polling place to make voting easier. Contact your local county auditor for a sample ballot containing any local measures or candidates. State law provides: "Any voter may take with him into the polling place any printed or written memorandum to assist him in marking or preparing his ballot." (RCW 29.51.180).

INITIATIVE MEASURE 547

"Shall state growth and environmental protection goals be implemented by measures including local comprehensive land use planning and development fees?"

YES NO

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 4203

"Shall a constitutional amendment permit basing the tax value of low-income housing of five or more units upon current use?"

YES NO

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 4231

"Shall constitutional provisions governing the creation of new counties be amended to allow requirements for county formation, annexation, and..."

YES NO

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 8212

"Shall a constitutional amendment permit voters at an election to approve excess property taxes for up to six-year periods?"

YES NO

CANDIDATES

U.S. Representative

State Representative Position 1

State Senator (if applicable)

State Representative Position 2