Washington State
House of Representatives
Office of Program Research

BILL ANALYSIS

Technology, Economic Development, & Veterans Committee

SSB 6149

Brief Description: Concerning the definition of "rural county" for purposes of public facilities funding.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Business, Trade & Economic Development (originally sponsored by Senators Wilson, J., Dozier, Short and Chapman).

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Expands the definition of rural county to include a county with a population density of 100 persons per square mile or greater, with no city with a population greater than 45,000 persons.

Hearing Date: 2/24/26

Staff: Emily Poole (786-7106).

Background:

A rural county is defined as a county with a population density of fewer than 100 persons per square mile or a county smaller than 225 square miles, as determined by the Office of Financial Management.

Several statutes use this definition, including but not limited to statutes referencing public facilities loans and grants, the coordination of community and economic development services, and excise taxes. As of 2025, there are 29 rural counties.

Summary of Bill:

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

The definition of rural county is expanded such that a county with a population density of 100 persons per square mile or greater, with no city with a population greater than 45,000 persons, is also defined as a rural county.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.