



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Jennifer Hayes
Communications & Public Relations Director
360-352-7800 jenniferh@biaw.com

BIAW Supports Hirst Fix Legislation Passed by Legislature

The Building Industry Association of Washington, which represents nearly 8,000 members in the home building industry, applauds the Washington State House and Senate for passing SSB 6091 yesterday evening, which fixes the 2016 Washington State Supreme Court ruling known as the *Hirst* decision. Governor Inslee signed the Hirst fix legislation at 12:25 p.m. today.

This legislation will ensure home builders can get back to building in rural areas that rely on household wells, and will help the people of Washington in keeping housing affordable.

“We fully support the final bill passed by the House and Senate,” said 2018 BIAW President Kevin Russell. “In the bill, for example, rural areas can continue to rely on the Department of Ecology as the state’s resource manager, which creates certainty and predictability for home builders, property owners and families that rely on household wells to build on rural land.”

BIAW thanks Sen. Judy Warnick (R-Moses Lake), Sen. Jim Honeyford (R-Sunnyside), Rep. David Taylor (R-Moxee), Rep. Vincent Buys (R-Lynden), Sen. Kevin Van De Wege (D-Sequim), Rep. Joe Fitzgibbon (D-Burien) and Rep. Larry Springer (D-Kirkland) for their leadership in working on a Hirst fix on behalf of Washington’s residents.

SSB 6091 passed last night includes:

- 3,000 gallons per day per connection for domestic wells in certain basins with existing watershed planning.
- In certain basins without watershed planning, household wells could withdraw 950 gallons per day per connection. This would change to 350 gallons per day for indoor use only in drought conditions. However, outdoor use would be permitted for fire buffers. The home building industry would also have representation on water enhancement and restoration committees in these local basins. These committees will invest \$300 million dollars into improving the state’s water resource.
- Local governments would once again be able to rely on Ecology as the state’s resource manager.

Prior to the passing of this legislation, those impacted by the *Hirst* decision faced expensive water surveys in some counties to determine the availability of water and moratoriums on building permits in others. The result was that new construction in many rural areas came to a near halt, leaving home builders, property owners and families in limbo on if they could rely on household wells – or build on their land in the near future.

Last September, an economic study commissioned by BIAW revealed full implementation of the Hirst decision would lead to \$6.9 billion lost in economic activity each year in Washington, \$37 billion in lost property values in areas impacted by Hirst, and nearly 9,300 lost jobs (FTEs) annually in rural Washington, among other impacts.

“This legislation provides clarity, certainty and predictability for rural home builders, property owners and families and will continue to preserve rural jobs and protect rural economies,” said BIAW Executive Vice President Art Castle.

###

Known as the “Champions of Affordable Housing,” the Building Industry Association of Washington is the largest trade association in Washington State, representing nearly 8,000 member companies involved in the home building industry.