

Councilmembers, housing activists, and urbanists alike know SEPA (the State Environmental Protection Act) is an important piece of environmental legislation but has also been used as a loophole for homeowners to advance their vendettas against new housing. The only thing these appeals accomplish is delay that thwarts Seattle's progress on creating an equitable city.

The changes do not gut SEPA. Instead, the [proposed bill](#) strengthens SEPA by streamlining the review process and setting a time limit for efficiency. Thus, city staffers spend less time reproducing multiple SEPA analyses and cut costs for unnecessary appeals designed to steer housing away from wealthy neighborhoods. The legislation adopts what our democratically-elected state legislators approved in [HB 1923](#).

In a city like Seattle, which [maintains tree canopy in areas with concentrated growth and loses tree canopy in single-family zones](#), it is better to create housing near job centers than to push people out, force them to pump CO<sub>2</sub> in the air, and build houses where forests once were.

Capping the length of SEPA appeals is good. The environment and housing--affordability and sustainability--belong together. Wealthy individuals strategically delaying local efforts for housing diversity is a highly-inequitable status quo and must change.

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#### Proposals:

1. Simple and Good:  
Add a time limit on the length of SEPA appeals in front of the Hearing Examiner to 120 days, 150 days with notice to all parties, or longer if all parties agree
2. Sleeper:  
Incorporate SEPA exemptions for nonproject actions under RCW 43.21C.450
3. Can't be part of this bill b/c it's not studied yet, but was the rec before the last comp plan update:  
Incorporate SEPA exemptions for multifamily, mixed-use and commercial development in urban villages up to limits currently provided for urban centers under RCW 43.21C.229
4. Public Interest:  
Incorporate waivers of appeals of some actions provided by HB 1923

Herbold proposes allowing SEPA appeals for single-detached areas of high risk, low opportunity