



Media Release

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Statistics on Washington's housing market and other useful information are available on WCRER's Web site: www.cbe.wsu.edu/~wcrer. For other information on real estate markets around the State of Washington, or general information about the real estate industry in the state (excluding legal questions), readers can reach the WCRER at 1-800-835-9683.

An Antiquated Law

Washington adopted its real estate license law, which regulates the conduct of real estate salespeople and brokers in 1925—nearly 80 years ago and clearly a much simpler time. While no section of 18.85 RCW still uses the 1925 language without amendment, those changes have come piecemeal. What remains is a patchwork of laws which have not been subjected to a comprehensive review all at once.

During the 11 years I have lived in Washington, I have watched the Real Estate Commission, at the directive of the Governor, go through the Washington Administrative Code (WAC) to simplify regulations and bring them into closer accordance with prevailing industry practices. This happened one section at a time over a period of several years.

As a consequence of that ongoing review, it became apparent to the Real Estate Commission and the staff at the Department of Licensing that they were using the WAC to overcome shortcomings in the legislation itself, so after a considered review of the advantages and drawbacks of encouraging the legislature to engage in a comprehensive review of the real estate license law, the Commission decided to establish a task force to engage in a considered review of the current license law and industry practice, with an eye to either proposing an entirely new law or full-scale amendments to the current legislation.

That task force began meeting in December 2003 with the hopes of being able to take a proposal to the 2006 legislative session. It's still too early to know if they will meet that self-imposed deadline, but it is important to the task force that they collect information from all interested parties and see guidance from all affected constituencies.

To assist in the collection of information regarding the licensing and regulation of real estate professionals in Washington, the Washington Center for Real Estate Research has created a Web site dedicated to this important task. The key feature of the site is a set of bulletin boards where real estate licensees, providers of services to the real estate industry, and consumers can post suggestions for topics which need to be addressed by the license law. These suggestions can range from the education and training which might be required to enter or remain in the real estate business to issues consumers have confronted during their recent dealings with real estate professionals.

The Web site is located at www.cbe.wsu.edu/~wcrer/1885taskforce. Click on the bulletin board which best describes your relationship to the real estate industry and share your experience. As the task force develops proposals for sections of the new legislation, those proposals are posted on the Web site for your review.