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## Local Government & Housing Committee

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### ESSB 6468

**Brief Description:** Coordinating the weatherization and structural rehabilitation of residential structures.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Environment, Water & Energy (originally sponsored by Senators Kauffman, Rockefeller, Pridemore, Berkey and Kline).

#### Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill

- Renames the Low-Income Weatherization Assistance Account to the Low-Income Weatherization and Structural Rehabilitation Assistance Account;
- Expands various statutes under the low-income residential weatherization program to include structural rehabilitation assistance in addition to weatherization assistance.
- Requires the Department of Commerce to prioritize the allocation of funds from the Low-Income Weatherization and Structural Rehabilitation Assistance Account to projects that utilize funding from related federal energy efficiency programs.
- Requires the Department of Commerce to develop policies to ensure that cost-effective investments are made within the Low-Income Residential Weatherization Program.

**Hearing Date:** 2/22/10

**Staff:** Becca Kenna-Schenk (786-7291) and Ethan Moreno (786-7386).

#### Background:

In 1987 the Legislature established the low-income residential weatherization program to assist low-income households in achieving monetary and energy savings through the application of energy efficiency measures in qualifying residences. The Low-Income Residential Weatherization Program (Program), which is commonly known as the Energy Matchmakers Program, matches dollar for dollar contributions from local utility or local government sponsors and allocates the funds to local weatherization agencies. Weatherization services provided under

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the Program include activities such as installing insulation, closing air gaps that allow heat to escape, and modifying heating systems to improve efficiency.

The Department of Commerce (Department) administers the Program and is responsible for allocating funds from the Low-Income Weatherization Assistance Account to local weatherization agencies. When allocating Program funds, the Department must give preference to low-income households at or below 125 percent of the federally established poverty level. The Department must also, to the extent feasible, ensure a balance of participation in terms of: (1) geographic regions of the state; (2) types of fuel used for heating; (3) owner-occupied and rental residences; and (4) single family and multifamily dwellings. In addition, the funds must be allocated for weatherization projects that identify and correct health and safety programs for residents, create family-wage jobs in the construction or energy efficiency sectors, and leverage environmentally sustainable technologies.

**Summary of Bill:**

The Low-Income Weatherization Assistance Account is renamed as the Low-Income Weatherization and Structural Rehabilitation Assistance Account (Account). Various statutes pertaining to the Program are expanded to include requirements for structural rehabilitation assistance. Definitions that are not referenced in the in the statutes pertaining to the Program are removed.

The Department is required to prioritize the allocation of funds from the Account to projects that utilize funding from related federal energy efficiency programs, including projects that maximize energy efficiency and extend the life of a home. When possible, the Department must consider local and state benefits, including pledged sponsor match and available funds from other sources, when allocating funds from the Account. In addition, the Department is required to develop policies to ensure that cost-effective investments are made within the Low-Income Residential Weatherization Program that maximize energy savings and extend the life of a home.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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