

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 5322

As Passed Legislature

Title: An act relating to emergency exemptions from building codes and construction standards for housing for indigent persons.

Brief Description: Permitting emergency exemptions from building codes.

Sponsor(s): Senate Committee on Commerce & Labor (originally sponsored by Senators Conner, Rasmussen, Snyder, Pelz and McCaslin).

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Housing, April 2, 1991, DP;
Passed House, April 11, 1991, 87-0;
Passed Legislature, 87-0.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
HOUSING**

Majority Report: *Do pass.* Signed by 8 members: Representatives Nelson, Chair; Franklin, Vice Chair; Mitchell, Ranking Minority Member; Winsley, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Ballard; Leonard; Ogden; and Wineberry.

Staff: Kenny Pittman (786-7392).

Background: The State Building Code is a comprehensive set of technical documents used to provide minimum standards for the construction, alteration, repair, and use of residential, commercial, and industrial structures within the state. Local governments are given the responsibility of enforcing the State Building Code within their respective jurisdiction.

Under the local administrative provisions of the State Building Code, the local building official may grant modifications to the requirements of the State Building Code. In granting the modifications the local building official must determine that the modification does not lessen any fire-protection requirements, or lessen any degree of structural integrity, or that the use is not dangerous to life.

Vacant buildings occasionally become available that could be converted into emergency shelter or transitional housing on a temporary basis. It appears that some local governments have required the buildings be brought into compliance with the standards of the State Building Code before the building could be used for emergency or transitional housing for homeless persons.

Summary of Bill: Beginning January 1, 1992, cities and counties are authorized to adopt an ordinance or resolution to exempt certain buildings from the requirements of the State Building Code. The exemption would apply to buildings that have had their use or occupancy changed to provide housing for indigent persons.

The ordinance or resolution authorizing the exemption to the State Building Code shall: (1) limit the exemption to existing buildings; (2) require the code deficiencies not to pose a threat to human life, health, or safety; (3) require the building to be owned or administered by a public agency or nonprofit corporation; and (4) limit the exemption to not more than five years with provisions for renewal if the exemption requirements are met at the time of renewal.

The State Building Code Council, by January 1, 1992, is required to adopt guidelines that cities and counties must use to exempt buildings used for housing for indigent persons.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: This bill will make it easier to use existing structures for housing for the homeless. The State Building Code Council will be required to develop a list of modifications that must be made before the building can be used. The basic health and safety requirements will have to be met.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Senator Conner, Sponsor (in favor of bill).