

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2165

As Reported By House Committee On:
Energy & Utilities

Title: An act relating to energy standards for log built homes.

Brief Description: Prescribing exemptions from energy standards for certain log built homes.

Sponsors: Representatives Bray, Casada, Forner, Grant, Sheldon, Jones, Lemmon, Johanson, Kessler, Romero, Morris and J. Kohl.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Energy & Utilities, January 20, 1994, DPA.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & UTILITIES

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Bray, Chair; Finkbeiner, Vice Chair; Casada, Ranking Minority Member; Chandler, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Caver; Johanson; Kessler; Kremen; and Long.

Staff: Harry Reinert (786-7110).

Background: The 1990 Legislature enacted a new residential energy code that was the culmination of a multi-year effort on the part of the Northwest Power Planning Council, the Bonneville Power Administration, and others to update the state's energy code. One issue that developed during discussions on the legislation was the impact the proposed energy code would have on log-built homes. Many of the assumptions about potential energy savings relied on traditional wood-frame construction. The log home industry was concerned that these assumptions would be inapplicable to log-built homes.

The residential energy code sets thermal performance standards that are higher for homes heated with electric resistance space heat than homes heated with other forms of space heating. In addition, the residential energy code divides the state into two climate zones, with higher thermal performance standards for areas of the state which have colder climates.

The statute directs the State Building Code Council (SBCC) to establish thermal performance standards for log homes that are consistent with the standards established for homes that are heated with sources other than electric resistance space heat. The log home industry believes that some requirements for log home construction adopted by the SBCC to implement the residential energy code are not cost effective. A particular concern has been the amount of insulation required in log walls.

Summary of Amended Bill: A log home with a minimum average wall thickness of three and one-half inches and with space heat other than electric resistance is not required to comply with the wall insulation standards of the residential energy code.

Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill: The original bill allowed a log home with any source of space heat to be exempt from the wall insulation standards. For homes in colder areas of the state, the walls would have been required to have a minimum average thickness of five and one-half inches. The amended bill does not allow the exemption for log homes with electric resistance space heat.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: The current energy code requirements for insulation in the walls of log homes are not cost effective. Although this bill will result in some additional energy consumption than the energy code currently provides for, the total additional energy which will be consumed is small.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Gerald Steele, Log Home Council (pro); Judith Darst, State Building Code Council (pro); Tim Nogler, Washington State Energy Office (pro, with amendment); John Fitzpatrick, Lindal Cedar Homes (pro); Don Greco, Greco Manufacturing (pro); and Ted Bottiger, Northwest Power Planning Council (pro, with some cautions).