

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6029

AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & UTILITIES, JANUARY 20, 1994

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

SPONSORS: Senators Owen, Hochstatter, Amondson, Roach, Haugen, Sutherland and Spanel

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & UTILITIES

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6029 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Sutherland, Chairman; Ludwig, Vice Chairman; Amondson, Hochstatter, McCaslin, Owen, Roach, Vognild, West and Williams.

Staff: Phil Moeller (786-7445)

Hearing Dates: January 18, 1994; January 20, 1994

BACKGROUND:

The 1990 Legislature adopted a comprehensive energy code for residential construction. This code sets minimum levels of insulation for ceilings, walls and floors. Minimum efficiency levels are also set for building components such as doors and windows. The code also makes distinctions between the warmer (zone 1) and cooler (zone 2) counties of the state, and sets higher efficiency requirements if electric space heat is used instead of other heating sources.

Zone 2 counties include Adams, Chelan, Douglas, Ferry, Grant, Kittitas, Lincoln, Okanogan, Pend Oreille, Spokane, Stevens, and Whitman. Zone 1 includes all other counties in the state.

Tradeoffs are also allowed in the code. A particular building component can be installed with lower efficiency levels if the equivalent heat loss is captured by another component with higher efficiency levels.

Minimum wall insulation levels are R-19 except in the colder counties when electric space heat is used; in these cases R-24 is required. Builders of log homes contend that these levels cannot be achieved without changing the aesthetic appeal of a log home and that component tradeoffs do not allow for a cost-effective alternative.

SUMMARY:

Log built homes with a prescribed minimum thickness meet residential energy code standards. The minimum thickness is three and one-half inches except in the zone 2 counties when

electric space heat is used; in these cases the minimum thickness is five and one-half inches.

EFFECT OF PROPOSED SUBSTITUTE:

Log built residences space heated with other than electric resistance space heat are exempt from R-19 wall insulation requirements if the log or solid timber walls are constructed with a minimum average thickness of at least three and one-half inches.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: none requested

TESTIMONY FOR:

The R-19 efficiency level requires logs that are too thick to be cost-effective. Other efficiency measures intended to make up for this heat loss also fail a cost-effectiveness test. Passage of this measure will help ensure the industry's survival.

TESTIMONY AGAINST: None

TESTIFIED: PRO: Senator Owen, prime sponsor; Gerald Steel, Log Home Council; Tim Nogler, Energy Office; Ted Bottiger, NW Power Planning Council; John Fitzpatrick, Lindal Cedar Homes; Dan Greco, Greco Manufacturing; Carl Burbridge, Lindal Cedar Homes