

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESHB 1555

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
State & Local Government, February 28, 2002

Title: An act relating to state building codes.

Brief Description: Finding that construction, reconstruction, and repair is best accomplished by having a statewide building code.

Sponsors: House Committee on Local Government & Housing (originally sponsored by Representatives Dunshee, Mulliken, Cooper, Cairnes, Kirby and Mielke).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: State & Local Government: 2/25/02, 2/28/02 [DPA].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON STATE & LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Gardner, Chair; Fairley, Vice Chair; Haugen, Horn, Kline and Swecker.

Staff: Diane Smith (786-7410)

Background: The State Building Code consists of a series of uniform model codes and standards that regulate the construction, reconstruction and rehabilitation of residential, commercial, and industrial buildings and structures. These model codes are developed and published by the International Conference of Building Officials (Uniform Building Code and Uniform Mechanical Code), the International Fire Code Institute (Uniform Fire Code), and the International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials (Uniform Plumbing Code and Plumbing Code Standards).

The State Building Code also consists of adopted rules and regulations designed to make buildings and facilities energy efficient according to the State Energy Code and to make them accessible to and usable by physically disabled or elderly persons. These uniform model codes and regulations are enforced by all counties, cities, and towns.

The State Building Code Council (SBCC) is responsible for the adoption and maintenance of the uniform model codes that comprise the State Building Code. This is accomplished through the rulemaking process of the Washington Administrative Procedure Act. The SBCC is required to regularly review updated versions of the uniform model codes and must amend the uniform model codes as appropriate. All decisions to adopt or amend the uniform model codes must be made prior to December 1 of any year and do not take effect before the end of the regular legislative session the next year.

The SBCC completed the update and adoption process of the State Building Code in November 2000. The uniform model code update process is based on a three-year cycle.

The current uniform codes and standards that comprise the State Building Code took effect on July 1, 2001.

The International Code Council (ICC) was established in 1994 as a nonprofit organization that developed a single set of comprehensive and coordinated national model construction codes. The founding organizations of the ICC are Building Officials and Code Administrators International, Inc., International Conference of Building Officials, and Southern Building Code Congress International, Inc. These organizations represent the three major model code writing organizations and have developed the model codes used throughout a majority of the country.

Summary of Amended Bill: The Washington State Building Code is revised to replace specific codes and standards published by the International Conference of Building Officials with codes and standards published by the International Code Council, Incorporated. The Uniform Building Code is replaced by the International Building Code and International Residential Code; the Uniform Mechanical Code is replaced by the International Mechanical Code; and the Uniform Fire Code and Uniform Fire Code Standards are replaced by the International Fire Code.

Language requiring each county to administer and enforce fire code standards in unincorporated areas of the county is revised to include the International Fire Code. This revision also applies to administration and enforcement by any fire protection district or political subdivision that assumes responsibility for fire protection activities.

The Building Code Council must promote fire and life safety and ensure that worker safety issues are addressed in the code adoption process by soliciting participation from first responders.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill: The substitute bill was a title-only bill.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 6, 2002.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed, except for sections 1, 2 and 4, which take effect July 1, 2003.

Testimony For: We need a code. The present code is no longer published and is out of date.

Testimony Against: There is a true consensus body of codes that were not looked at. Our only interest is to protect public health and safety.

Testified: PRO: Mary Kate Martin, WA Assn. of Building Officials, City of Federal Way; N. Sue Alden, State Building Code Council, AIA; Kraig Stevenson, ICBO; Jim Bowman, American Forest and Paper Assn.; Kathleen Collins, HVAC Contractors; John McDonald, WA State Assn. of Fire Marshals; Dan Packer, WA Assn. of Fire Chiefs; CON: Larry Stevens, Dan Sexton, WA State Assn. of Plumbers and Pipefitters; Dwight Perkins, International Assn. of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials; Robert Miller, National Fire

Protection Assn.; Joe Sternola, Permagas, Inc.; Baron Gassgaw; John Barth, Pettit Oil and Propane; Joe Andre, NEMA; Edwin L. Andrews, Inland NW Heating, Ventilation; Charles Mitcher, Kathy L. Thaut, Plumbing Heating Cooling Contractors of WA; Paul Ward, Heritage Propane.