

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESB 5624

As Passed Senate, February 1, 2002

Title: An act relating to the disclosure of fire protection and building safety information.

Brief Description: Requiring disclosure of fire protection and building safety information.

Sponsors: Senator Kohl-Welles.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Judiciary: 2/27/01 [DP].

Passed Senate: 3/13/01, 48-0; 2/1/02, 49-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Kline, Chair; Constantine, Vice Chair; Costa, Hargrove, Johnson, Long, McCaslin, Roach and Thibaudeau.

Staff: Aldo Melchiori (786-7439)

Background: Landlords are required by state law to keep the premises of their building(s) fit for human habitation. Included is the responsibility to maintain the premises to substantially comply with applicable codes, to maintain the structural components of the building, to keep the premises pest free, to provide adequate heat and hot water, and to make all necessary repairs.

The Governor's Fire Protection Task Force made many recommendations concerning fire safety in boarding homes. The task force also looked at fire safety in multi-family dwellings, such as apartment buildings. Members of that task force suggest that tenants of multi-family dwellings be provided with written notice of fire safety procedures and equipment in the multi-family dwellings they rent.

Summary of Bill: Landlords of single-family residences must provide written notice disclosing fire and protection information. The landlord of a multi-family dwelling must provide written notice to tenants that disclose the fire protection and safety information for the building including: sprinkler systems, smoke detection devices and whether they are hard wired or battery operated, other detection systems, emergency notification plans, evacuation practices, smoking policies, and emergency relocation plans. The written notice must be provided to new tenants at the time the agreement is signed and must be provided to current tenants by no later than January 1, 2004.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: This is good public policy. It is a common sense provision that promotes public safety.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Senator Kohl-Welles; Buffi Bloom, Lewis County Rental Association; Paul O'Connor, Fire Sprinkler Association of Puget Sound; Bob Mitchell, Washington Association of Realtors; Patty VanDerBiosk, AASK; Mark Gjurasic, Washington Apartment Association.

House Amendment(s): A landlord of a multifamily residential building may provide tenants the required fire safety and protection information either as a written notice or as a checklist that includes a diagram showing the emergency evacuation routes.