

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1734

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Land Use & Planning, April 3, 2003

Title: An act relating to state building codes.

Brief Description: Updating the state building code.

Sponsors: House Committee on Local Government (originally sponsored by Representatives Romero, Hinkle, Moeller, Delvin, Grant, Jarrett and Flannigan; by request of Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Land Use & Planning: 3/24/03, 4/3/03 [DPA, DNPA].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LAND USE & PLANNING

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Mulliken, Chair; Kline, Morton and T. Sheldon.

Minority Report: Do not pass as amended.

Signed by Senator McCaslin.

Staff: Tim Watterson (786-7441)

Background: The State Building Code consists of a set of national model codes and standards that regulate the construction and remodeling of residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional structures. Local governments may amend the State Building Code to provide additional standards. The current State Building Code includes the Uniform Building Code, the Uniform Building Code Standards and the Uniform Mechanical Code (published by the International Conference of Building Officials (ICBO)); the Uniform Fire Code and the Uniform Fire Code Standards (published by the International Fire Code Institute); and the Uniform Plumbing Code and Uniform Plumbing Code Standards (published by the International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials). The State Building Code also includes adopted regulations to make buildings more energy efficient according to the State Energy Code and to make buildings more accessible for disabled and elderly people.

The State Building Code Council (SBCC) is responsible for the adoption and maintenance of the model codes that constitute the State Building Code. The SBCC is required to regularly review updated versions of the uniform model codes and to adopt or amend the uniform model codes as appropriate. Decisions to adopt or amend the uniform model codes must be made before December 1 of any year and do not take effect before the end of the regular legislative session the following year.

The International Code Council (ICC) was established as a nonprofit organization in 1994 for the purpose of developing a single set of national model construction codes. The member

organizations of the ICC are the ICBO, the Building Officials and Code Administrators International (BOCA), and the Southern Building Code Congress International (SBCCI). These organizations are the three major model code entities and have developed the model codes that are currently used in most of the United States.

Summary of Amended Bill: The State Building Code is revised to replace the model codes and standards published by the International Conference of Building Officials (ICBO) with the model codes and standards published by the International Code Council (ICC). The Uniform Building Code and Uniform Building Code Standards are replaced by the International Building Code and the International Residential Code. The Uniform Mechanical Code is replaced by the International Mechanical Code. The Uniform Fire Code and Uniform Fire Code Standards are replaced by the International Fire Code. The Uniform Plumbing Code and Uniform Plumbing Code Standards are not affected by the bill. The State Building Code Council (SBCC) is required to adopt the replacement codes.

The International Residential Code must not take precedence over existing statutory provisions regulating the electrical code, the plumbing code, or the energy code. The SBCC must review all nationally recognized standards on firefighter and worker safety and amend the adopted codes to incorporate minimum safety standards.

Counties must administer and enforce the International Fire Code in unincorporated areas of counties. These requirements also apply to any fire protection district or political subdivision that assumes by interlocal agreement the responsibilities for fire protection activities in those areas.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill: The amendment adds a legislative finding that building codes are an integral component of affordable housing and requires that the State Building Code Council solicit input from first responders and the housing construction industry to ensure that firefighter safety and housing affordability issues are addressed during the code adoption process. A specific reference to National Fire Protection Association or other national fire safety standards is deleted from the section adopting the International Fire Code.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: International codes (I-Codes) maximize consistency with existing uniform codes. The I-Codes are recognized as current standard and have been applied in other states. The State Building Code Council voted 14-1 for adopting I-Codes. Cities already budget for new codes. If no codes are adopted, the council and local governments will have to evaluate and update codes, leading to a "patchwork quilt" of codes.

Testimony Against: The State Building Code Council adopted I-Codes without enough input or analysis. The current codes work well; there is no compelling need for new codes. There are inefficiencies in I-Codes adoption of standards by reference. There are high costs of code books and training for small businesses and government. I-Codes are the product of

building officials and government, not businesses affected by them. NFPA has more experience because it developed the standards applied in all codes.

Testified: Robert Miller, NFPA (con); Mike Brown, Kitsap County Fire District #7 (con); Kelly Fox, Washington State Council of Firefighters (con); John Loscheider, Loscheider Engineering (con); Stan Price, State Building Code Council (pro); Victoria Lincoln, Association of Washington Cities (pro); John Cochran, State Building Code Council (pro); Daimon Doyle, Olympia Master Builders (pro); Larry Andrews, Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning Association (con); Joe Sternola, National Propane Gas Association (con); Tom Knox, National Electrical Contractors Washington (con); Charles Mitchel, Plumbing, Heating, Cooling Contractors of Washington (con); Dan Sexton, Washington Association of Plumbers and Pipefitters (con); Warren Burns, Washington Association of Fire Marshals (pro); Joe Bettridge, Sunset Air (pro); Mel Sorenson, Northwest Propane Gas Association (pro); Tom Kinsman, Architects and Engineers Legislative Council (pro); Kathleen Collins, SMACNA (pro); Tom McBride, Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development (pro).