

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6156

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Financial Institutions, Housing & Consumer Protection, January 19, 2006

**Title:** An act relating to improving enforcement of the state building code.

**Brief Description:** Requiring inspections of remodels to single-family residences.

**Sponsors:** Senator Fairley.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Financial Institutions, Housing & Consumer Protection: 1/12/06, 1/19/06 [DPS].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS, HOUSING & CONSUMER PROTECTION

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6156 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Fairley, Chair; Berkey, Vice Chair; Benton, Ranking Minority Member; Benson, Brandland, Finkbeiner, Franklin, Keiser and Spanel.

**Staff:** Jennifer Arnold (786-7471)

**Background:** Local governments are responsible for the enforcement of the state building code. Homeowners must obtain permits from the local permit issuing authority and have scheduled inspections for certain remodels or additions made to single-family, owner-occupied residences. However, there is no statutory requirement that a homeowner receive a copy of the schedule of inspections to be conducted in relation to the permit.

It is believed that enforcement of the state building code promotes the health, safety, and welfare of homeowners and that homeowner education in regard to local government inspections of home remodels and alterations is a necessary component in effectively enforcing the code.

**Summary of Substitute Bill:** The local government is required to provide an owner of record, who is remodeling or making an addition to an owner-occupied, single-family residence, a copy of the inspection schedule from the local permit issuing authority: (1) by regular mail; and (2) at the site of the first required inspection.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:** The requirement for the local government to "ensure" that a final inspection is made of a remodel or addition to an owner-occupied, single-family residence is removed. Further, there the requirement for a final inspection to be performed before a local permit issuing authority can transmit a copy of a permit relating to an alteration of a single-family residence to the county assessor is also removed.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 11, 2006.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

**Effective Date:** January 1, 2007.

**Testimony For:** Something needs to be done for situations where a homeowner applies for a permit, pays for the work, and the work nonetheless turns out to be not up to code. Currently, there is no final inspection until the contractor calls the permit issuing authority, informing them that the work is done. The responsibility for ensuring that a final inspection is completed should be on the local government, not the homeowner.

Homeowner education in regards to the permit issuing process and the accompanying inspections is necessary to enable homeowners to be informed of the local requirements and be aware of whether contractors are following those requirements.

**Testimony Other:** The requirement to "inform" the homeowner and "ensure" that a final inspection is completed may be onerous on the local governments. There are concerns about how to make the process of informing the homeowner and ensuring a final inspection easy to understand without adding to the already existing complexities and thus, discouraging citizens from applying for permits.

**Who Testified:** PRO: Senator Fairley.

OTHER: Chris Newby, Washington Association of Building Officials; Bob Mitchell, Washington Realtors; David Sanders, Yakima County; Brian Minnich, Building Industry Association of Washington.