

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2292

As Reported by House Committee On:
Local Government

Title: An act relating to private residential fire sprinklers.

Brief Description: Addressing private residential fire sprinklers.

Sponsors: Representatives Simpson and Ormsby.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Local Government: 2/26/07 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires the State Building Code Council to form a technical advisory group to research and review policies and procedures for residential fire sprinklers.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 5 members: Representatives Simpson, Chair; Eddy, Vice Chair; Curtis, Ranking Minority Member; B. Sullivan and Takko.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Schindler, Assistant Ranking Minority Member and Ross.

Staff: Jessica Nowakowski (786-7291) and Ethan Moreno (786-7386).

Background:

State Building Code Council

The State Building Code Council (Council) was created by statute in 1974 to provide analysis and advice to the Legislature and the Governor's Office on state building code issues. The Council establishes the minimum building, mechanical, fire, plumbing, and energy code requirements in Washington by reviewing, developing, and adopting the state building code. The State Building Code Act (Act) sets forth requirements through the provision of building

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codes to promote the health, safety, and welfare of the occupants or users of buildings and structures throughout the state

The Act consists of regulations adopted by reference from the International Building Code (IBC), the International Residential Code (IRC), the International Mechanical Code (IMC), the National Fuel Gas Code, the International Fire Code (IFC), and the Uniform Plumbing Code and Uniform Plumbing Code Standards. In maintaining the Act, the Council must regularly review updated versions of the codes and other pertinent information and amend the Act as deemed appropriate by the Council. The Council may also issue opinions relating to the codes at the request of a local official charged with the duty to enforce the Act.

Private Residential Fire Sprinkler Charges

Fire sprinklers are required in certain sections of the IBC, IRC, IFC, and by the National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA). Sprinkler requirements of the IBC are typically applied to larger residential occupancies such as hotels, apartments, dormitories or condominiums. Single family dwellings (as defined by the IRC) in Washington are not required to install sprinklers for fire protection, unless local municipalities have adopted additional requirements of the IRC into their local building code requirements.

Water purveyors throughout the state may work with the State Board of Health to establish "standby fees" or a fee structure based on the required amount of water necessary to supply residential sprinklers with adequate water to fight a fire. Municipalities and water purveyors may determine their own standby fees or fee structures for costs incurred in providing the necessary water levels.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The State Building Code Council is required to form a technical advisory group to research and review policies and procedures for residential fire sprinklers. The purpose of the study is the eventual development of a model building code policy for residential fire sprinkler installation and services.

The technical advisory group must consist of:

- representatives from a city association, a county association, the association of building officials, an association of special purpose water sewer districts, and a public utility district association;
- a fire chief, a state licensed residential fire sprinkler contractor, and an architect; and
- any other representative deemed necessary to develop the model policy.

Findings of the technical advisory group must be presented to the appropriate committees of the Legislature by the State Building Code Council by January 15, 2008.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

A representative from an association of special purpose water sewer districts is included in the private residential fire sprinkler technical advisory group.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Due to local code requirements and lack of water flow access, fire sprinklers are being required. This bill addresses concerns brought up by a previous bill. The study will attempt to solve an unsolvable problem. Most concerns are technical in nature.

(With concerns) The language of the bill is very broad and could therefore cause unintended consequences. Language to clarify the intention of the bill would be helpful.

(Opposed) Creating residential fire sprinkler policies changes the objectivity of a study. This bill could have many unintended consequences, such as liability, inconsistency of practices to conserve water, and a shift in costs if a code were imposed that did not consider all factors that effect rate purveyors in a district.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Paul O'Connor, Fire Sprinkler Advisory Board of Puget Sound; and Joe Daniels, Washington Association of Sewer/Water Districts.

(With concerns) Brian Minnich, Building Industry Association of Washington; and Bill Clarke, Washington Public Utility District Association.

(Opposed) Steve Lindstrom, Sno-King Water District Coalition.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.