

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2575

As Reported by House Committee On:
Local Government

Title: An act relating to fire sprinkler systems in private residences.

Brief Description: Forming a technical advisory group on fire sprinkler systems in private residences.

Sponsors: Representatives Simpson, Ormsby and Wood.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Local Government: 1/22/08, 2/1/08 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires the State Building Code Council to convene a technical advisory board group to examine issues, barriers, and incentives pertaining to private residential fire sprinkler systems.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Simpson, Chair; Takko, Vice Chair; Warnick, Ranking Minority Member; Schindler, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Eddy, Nelson and Schmick.

Staff: Lyset Cadena (786-7291) and Ethan Moreno (786-7386).

Background:

The State Building Code Advisory Council

The State Building Code Advisory Council (Council) was created by statute in 1974 to provide analysis and advice to the Legislature and the Office of the Governor 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

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provision of building 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, 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 Systems

Fire sprinklers are required in certain sections of the IBC, IRC, IFC, and by the National Fire Protection Agency. 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.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The State Building Code Council (Council) is required to form a technical advisory group to research issues, barriers, and incentives on residential fire sprinkler systems.

The advisory group must consist of:

- representatives from a city association, a county association, the association of building officials, a special purpose water-sewer district association, a public utility district association, a mutual water company, the Department of Health, and the Department of Ecology;
- a fire marshal, a licensed residential fire sprinkler contractor, an architect, and a residential builder; and
- any other representative deemed necessary by the Council.

Findings of the technical advisory group must be presented to the appropriate committees of the Legislature by the Council by January 15, 2009.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The following positions are added to the residential fire sprinkler system technical advisory group:

- a representative from the insurance industry;
- the state director of fire protection or his or her designee;
- a local fire marshal; and
- a licensed residential fire sprinkler fitter.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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) Residential fire sprinkler systems are of a significant value, save lives, and decrease the fatality rate of fires. Many homes across the country have residential fire sprinkler systems and some homes in Washington have installed residential fire sprinkler systems.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Simpson, prime sponsor; Paul O'Connor, Fire Sprinkler Advisory Board of Puget Sound; John Neff, Washington State Building Code Council; Mike Dahl and Darrin Parsons, United Association of Sprinkler Fitters, Local 669; Nancy Carpenter, State Farm Insurance; and Mike Matlick, State Fire Marshal's Office.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.