

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 2575

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Government Operations & Elections, February 25, 2008

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: House Committee on Local Government (originally sponsored by Representatives Simpson, Ormsby and Wood).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/18/08, 93-2.

Committee Activity: Government Operations & Elections: 2/25/08 [DP, w/oRec].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ELECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Fairley, Chair; Oemig, Vice Chair; Kline, McDermott and Pridemore.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senators Roach, Ranking Minority Member; Benton and Swecker.

Staff: Cindy Calderon (786-7784)

Background: The Washington State Building Code Council (Council) establishes the minimum building, mechanical, fire, plumbing, and energy code requirements by reviewing, developing, and adopting the state building code. The State Building Code Act (Act) provides requirements to promote the health, safety, and welfare of the occupants or users of buildings and structures throughout the state. The Council must regularly review updated versions of the codes and other relevant information, and amend the Act as needed. The Council may issue opinions regarding the codes upon request of a local official who has a duty to enforce the Act.

The Act is composed of regulations adopted by reference from provisions of other codes such as: the International Building Code (IBC) and the International Residential Code (IRC). Specific sections of the IBC and the IRC require and or address the issue of fire sprinklers. The IRC governs one- and two-family dwellings, and does not require the installation of fire sprinklers unless a local municipality has adopted additional requirements into their local building codes. The IBC governs all other types of buildings. The IBC typically requires sprinklers for larger residential occupancies such as hotels, apartments, dormitories, or condominiums.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Summary of Bill: The State Building Code Council (Council) is required to form an advisory group to research issues, barriers, and incentives relating to residential fire sprinkler systems.

The advisory group consists of representatives from: a city association; a county association; a building officials association; a special purpose water-sewer district association; a public utility district association; a mutual water company; the Department of Health; the Department of Ecology; and the insurance industry. The advisory group must also consist of: the state director of fire protection or the director's designee; a local fire marshal; a licensed residential sprinkler fitter; a licensed residential fire sprinkler contractor; an architect; a residential builder; and other representatives the Council deems necessary.

The Council must develop recommendations and report the advisory groups findings to the Legislature by January 15, 2009.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Substitute Bill: PRO: The Council is the appropriate venue to conduct the study of voluntary installation of fire sprinklers in residential homes. The bill sets forth the scope of the study, the time frame, identifies the interest groups, and looks at the impact on homeowners to install these sprinklers.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Tim Nogler, State Building Code Council; Paul O'Connor, Fire Sprinkler Advisory Board of Puget Sound.