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**Community Development, Housing &  
Tribal Affairs Committee**

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**HB 1720**

**Brief Description:** Concerning healthy housing.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Robinson, Peterson, Stanford, Riccelli, Gregerson, Senn, Appleton, Ortiz-Self, Tarleton, Jinkins and Santos.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Requires the Department of Commerce to include projects that improve health and safety in the prioritization of funds and develop policies supporting the health and safety of residents under the Low-Income Residential Weatherization Program.
- Authorizes healthy housing improvements for homes undergoing weatherization and defines "healthy housing improvements."

**Hearing Date:** 2/5/15

**Staff:** Kirsten Lee (786-7133).

**Background:**

Low-Income Residential Weatherization Program.

In 1987 the Legislature established the Low-Income Residential Weatherization Program (Program). This voluntary program, administered by the Department of Commerce (Commerce), seeks to achieve monetary and energy savings for low-income households and other energy consumers by directing public and private weatherization resources from sponsoring entities or other sources to low income households. Fund sources include the Weatherization Assistance Program within the United States Department of Energy, the Bonneville Power Administration, and the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program within the United States Health and Human Services Department. Commerce also receives state funds, which are matched by utility companies that sell gas and electric heat.

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*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.*

Commerce defines "low income," but the amount may not exceed 80 percent of median household income, adjusted for household size, for the county in which the dwelling unit to be weatherized is located.

Weatherization services provided under the Program include energy and resource conservation, energy efficiency improvements, repairs, indoor quality improvements, health and safety improvements, and client education. Commerce solicits proposals for low-income weatherization programs from potential sponsors and allocates funding.

United States Department of Energy Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP)/ Weatherization Plus Health Initiative.

The U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) was created in 1976 to assist low-income families who lacked resources to invest in energy efficiency. The WAP also plays a role in ensuring the health and safety of low-income homes. The DOE funded Weatherization Plus Health Initiative connects the WAP network with providers of healthy homes services. Healthy homes services include lead hazard control, remediation of asthma triggers (including moisture, mold, and pests), reduction in exposure to radon and other toxic chemicals, and prevention of injuries caused by old or dilapidated housing.

**Summary of Bill:**

Sponsors submitting proposals under the Program may propose to use grant awards and matching funds to make healthy housing improvements to homes undergoing weatherization. Projects that improve the health and safety of residents are added to the types of projects that receive prioritized funding from the Program. Commerce must also develop policies that improve the health and safety of residents in homes and building requiring improvements.

Healthy housing is defined as increasing the health and safety of a home by integrating energy efficiency activities and indoor environmental measures, consistent with the Weatherization Plus Health Initiative of the DOE and the healthy housing principles adopted by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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