
Local Government Committee

SB 5139

Brief Description: Concerning building code standards for certain buildings four or more stories high.

Sponsors: Senators Roach, Liias, Conway, Benton, McCoy, Dandel and Ericksen.

<p>Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eliminates an exemption in the State Building Code Act for certain buildings that are four or more stories high.
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Hearing Date: 3/18/15

Staff: Michaela Murdock (786-7289).

Background:

The State Building Code Act.

The State Building Code Act (Act) was enacted in 1974 and adopts by reference the model codes and standards that comprise the State Building Code (SBC), including building, residential, fire, and plumbing codes. The SBC provides statewide minimum performance standards and requirements for construction and construction materials, consistent with accepted standards of engineering, fire, and life safety.

The State Building Code Council (Council) consists of 15 members appointed by the Governor who represent, for example, local governments and the building construction profession, and five *ex officio* legislative members. The Council's duties include adopting, amending, and maintaining model codes that comprise the SBC, and developing and adopting any code related to buildings as required by the Legislature.

Counties, cities, and towns are required to enforce the SBC, as adopted and amended by the Council, within their jurisdictions. The governing body of a county, city, or town may amend the SBC as it applies within its jurisdiction; however, the minimum performance standards of the

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SBC may not be diminished by local amendments. Except as specified in the Act, the SBC applies to all buildings and structures, including those owned by the state or other units of government.

The State Building Code—Exemptions.

The SBC specifically exempts certain buildings and structures from application of the SBC's provisions, including:

- specified classes or types of buildings or structures, except for single-family or multifamily residential buildings, to which a county, city, or town has limited application of any portion of the SBC; and
- any building four or more stories high with a B occupancy, as defined by the 1982 edition of the Uniform Building Code, and a city fire insurance rating of 1, 2, or 3, as defined by a recognized fire rating bureau or organization.

Model Codes.

The International Code Council (ICC) is a non-profit organization that develops and publishes model codes for building, construction, and design standards. Updates to the codes are developed and published on a three-year cycle. The SBC adopts by reference several model codes published by the ICC, including the International Building Code and the International Residential Code. The 2012 editions of the building and residential codes are currently adopted in Washington.

A predecessor organization to the ICC, the International Conference of Building Officials (ICBO) formerly published the Uniform Building Code (UBC). The last edition of the UBC was published in 1997. When the Act was first adopted by the Legislature in 1974, it adopted by reference several model codes published by the ICBO, including the 1973 edition of the UBC. The Act no longer adopts by reference model codes published by the ICBO.

Summary of Bill:

The exemption in the SBC for any building that is four or more stories high with a B occupancy, as defined by the 1982 UBC, and a city fire insurance rating of 1, 2, or 3, is eliminated. As a result, the provisions of the SBC apply to such buildings.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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