

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1011

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Government Operations & Security, March 19, 2015

Title: An act relating to assigning counties to two climate zones for purposes of the state building code.

Brief Description: Assigning counties to two climate zones for purposes of the state building code.

Sponsors: Representatives Short, Takko, Springer, Buys, Kretz, Shea, Gregerson and Condotta.

Brief History: Passed House: 2/11/15, 98-0.

Committee Activity: Government Operations & Security: 3/12/15, 3/19/15 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & SECURITY

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Roach, Chair; Benton, Vice Chair; Pearson, Vice Chair; Liias, Ranking Minority Member; Dansel, Habib and McCoy.

Staff: Karen Epps (786-7424)

Background: The State Building Code. The State Building Code Council (Council) was established in 1974 to provide analysis and advice to the Legislature and the Office of the Governor on State Building Code (Code) issues. The Council establishes the minimum building, mechanical, fire, plumbing, and energy code requirements in Washington by reviewing, developing, and adopting the Code.

The Code sets forth requirements through the provision of building codes to promote the health, safety, and welfare of the occupants or users of buildings and structures throughout the state. The Code consists of regulations adopted by reference from the International Building Code, the International Residential Code, the International Mechanical Code, the National Fuel Gas Code, the International Fire Code, and the Uniform Plumbing Code and Uniform Plumbing Code Standards.

The State Energy Code. The Code also includes the Washington State Energy Code (Energy Code), which is a state-written, state-specific code. The Energy Code provides a minimum level of energy efficiency, but allows flexibility in building design, construction, and heating

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equipment efficiencies. The Council must adopt state energy codes that require buildings constructed from 2013 through 2031 to move incrementally toward a 70 percent reduction in energy use by 2031. The Council may amend the Energy Code by rule if the amendments increase energy efficiency in the affected buildings. Effective July 1, 2013, the Council adopted the 2012 edition of the International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) with amendments as the Energy Code.

The Energy Code must consider regional climatic conditions. Statute assigns each of Washington's 39 counties to one of two climate zones: climate zone 1 or climate zone 2. The following counties are assigned by statute to climate zone 2: Adams, Chelan, Douglas, Ferry, Grant, Kittitas, Lincoln, Okanogan, Pend Oreille, Spokane, Stevens, and Whitman counties. All other counties are assigned to climate zone 1.

The 2012 IECC. The IECC is a model code developed and published by the International Code Council, Inc. The IECC regulates the design and construction of buildings for the effective use and conservation of energy over the useful life of each building.

The 2012 IECC model code divides the United States into eight climate zones: 1 through 8, with sub-designations A, B, and C. Climate zone assignments are used to determine whether different IECC requirements are applicable within a specific jurisdiction or region. Under the 2012 IECC model code, Washington is divided into three climate zones: 4C, 5B, and 6B. In general counties located west of the Cascade Mountain Range are assigned to Zone 4C, and counties located east of the Cascade Mountain Range, with the exception of four counties, are assigned to Zone 5B. Four counties, Ferry, Okanogan, Pend Oreille, and Stevens, are assigned to Zone 6B.

In adopting the 2012 IECC as the Energy Code, the Council amended the model code's climate zone assignments. The Council assigned each county to one of two climate zones, rather than to three zones. The following counties are assigned by rule to Zone 5B: Adams, Asotin, Benton, Chelan, Columbia, Douglas, Ferry, Franklin, Garfield, Grant, Kittitas, Klickitat, Lincoln, Okanogan, Pend Oreille, Skamania, Spokane, Stevens, Walla Walla, Whitman, and Yakima. All other counties in Washington are assigned by rule to Zone 4C.

Summary of Bill: The state's climate zones used in the Energy Code are designated in statute. The assignment of a county to a climate zone may not be changed by adoption of a model code or rule. The Council is not prohibited from adopting the same rules or standards for each climate zone. One zone is comprised of counties listed in statute, while the other zone is comprised of all other counties not listed in statute.

The climate zone assignments of nine counties are changed. The following counties are added to the zone with counties listed in statute:

- Asotin;
- Benton;
- Columbia;
- Franklin;
- Garfield;
- Klickitat;
- Skamania;

- Walla Walla; and
- Yakima.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Northeastern Washington was in the third climate zone under the International Energy Conservation Code. Being in a separate climate zone presented a hardship to those counties. These small counties share information and network with the larger counties, like Spokane County. Putting these counties in a separate climate zone isolated them from being able to work with the other counties, including using their code inspectors and building officials. Being in a separate climate zone also increased costs to builders in those smaller counties and meant that materials were not readily available in those smaller counties. This legislation establishes two climate zones. It does not prevent the Council from adopting energy efficiency codes, but allows all eastern Washington counties and western Washington counties to adopt the same codes. This bill brings the statute into compliance with the adopted current code.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Short, prime sponsor; Jan Himebaugh, Building Industry Assn. of WA.

Persons Signed in to Testify But Not Testifying: No one.