

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5139

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As Passed Senate, March 11, 2015

**Title:** An act relating to building code standards for certain buildings four or more stories high.

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

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

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Government Operations & Security (Note: Senate Resolution 8609 adopted January 27, 2015, renamed the Committee on Government Operations & State Security to Committee on Government Operations & Security): 1/15/15, 1/27/15 [DP].  
Passed Senate: 3/11/15, 49-0.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & SECURITY

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

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

**Staff:** Karen Epps (786-7424)

**Background:** The State Building Code Council (Council) was created 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. When the Code was adopted in 1974, certain buildings four or more stories high were exempt from the Code.

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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.*

**Summary of Bill:** The exemption from the Code for certain buildings four or more stories high is deleted.

**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: This issue was brought by the plumbers. Currently law allows for local differences in this area of the building code and if this bill passes there would be a state preemption in this small area. There is one State Building Code and this paragraph allows local jurisdictions to require the use of a different code. The plumbers union trains its members on the use of the Uniform Plumbing Code. It is difficult for plumbers when someone wants to use a different code. This bill will address that problem. This issue was researched in the state archives, and it was not determined why this anomaly is in the law. There are 7000 licensed plumbers in the state and they are trained a licensed under the Uniform Plumbing Code. The concern in the pipe trades is that folks are trained and tested under one standard and then, in one city in the state, there is a different code standard for business buildings. The different code requirements raises concerns about safety.

CON: This bill removes local control. Building officials believe that there are legitimate reasons why in some cases there need to be variances at the local level. Building officials believe that this ability to make variances at the local level is important and this bill would remove that local control. This bill creates a preemption issue.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator Roach, prime sponsor; Larry Stevens, Mechanical Contractors Assn. of Western WA; Gordon Baxter, Plumbers and Pipefitters Union.

CON: Amy Brackenbury, WA Assn. of Building Officials.