

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2931

As Reported by House Committee On:
Technology & Economic Development

Title: An act relating to the state energy code for residential structures.

Brief Description: Increasing energy efficiency.

Sponsors: Representatives Doglio, Fey, Tarleton, Jinkins and Slatter.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Technology & Economic Development: 1/30/18, 2/1/18 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Establishes a lower efficiency, intermediate efficiency, and high efficiency option for the State Energy Code for residential structures beginning with the 2018 code cycle.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Morris, Chair; Kloba, Vice Chair; Tarleton, Vice Chair; Doglio, Fey, Hudgins, Santos, Slatter and Wylie.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 8 members: Representatives Smith, Ranking Minority Member; DeBolt, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Harmsworth, Manweller, McDonald, Nealey, Steele and Young.

Staff: Nikkole Hughes (786-7156).

Background:

State Energy Code.

The State Energy Code is part of the State Building Code, which sets the minimum construction requirements for buildings in the state. The State Energy Code provides a

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minimum level of energy efficiency for residential and nonresidential buildings, but allows flexibility in building design, construction, and heating equipment efficiencies. The State Building Code Council (Council) maintains the State Energy Code. Unless otherwise amended by rule, the State Energy Code must reflect the 2006 edition.

The State Energy Code for residential structures preempts the residential energy code of each city, town, and county in Washington, unless the local jurisdiction's residential energy code exceeds the requirements of the Code and was adopted before March 1, 1990.

International Energy Conservation Code.

The International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) is published by the International Code Council, Inc., a nonprofit organization that develops comprehensive and coordinated national model construction codes. The IECC was last updated in 2015 and is reviewed and amended every 3 years. The 2015 IECC contains separate provisions for residential and nonresidential buildings.

Adoption and Amendment Requirements for the State Energy Code.

The State Energy Code was last amended in 2016, when the Council adopted the 2015 IECC for both residential and nonresidential buildings as the State Energy Code.

The Council reviews, updates, and adopts new model state building codes every three years. 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 State Energy Code must consider regional climatic conditions. The Council may amend the State Energy Code by rule if the amendments increase energy efficiency in the affected buildings.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Beginning with the 2018 edition, the State Energy Code for residential structures must provide three options:

- a lower efficiency option that conforms with the requirement to move incrementally toward a 70 percent reduction in energy use by 2031;
- an intermediate efficiency option that results in dwelling units that use 10 percent less energy annually than those built in accordance with the lower efficiency option; and
- a high efficiency option that results in dwelling units that use 20 percent less energy annually than those built in accordance with the lower efficiency option.

The lower efficiency option must be the default option. Cities, towns, and counties are permitted to select the intermediate efficiency option or the high efficiency option prior to the effective date of each new edition of the State Energy Code.

The provision exempting certain local residential energy codes from preemption by the State Energy Code is removed.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill provides that the default option under the State Energy Code for residential structures is the lower efficiency option, rather than the high efficiency option, and that local jurisdictions are permitted to opt-in to the intermediate efficiency option or high efficiency options.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The additional efficiency options in the bill give local jurisdictions greater flexibility in achieving their climate and energy efficiency goals. This bill would complement the existing requirement to move toward 70 percent more efficiency in residential structures by 2031, and would allow local jurisdictions to take on a greater role in achieving that goal. Advancing the State Energy Code is the strongest policy tool available for reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the building sector of the economy.

(Opposed) The State Building Code Council (Council) has significant funding issues. This bill would require the development of two additional codes for which the Council would be responsible. The building industry is already having difficulty meeting the current State Energy Code. By requiring greater efficiency in residential buildings, this bill would also make the cost of housing more expensive.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Elyette Weinstein, Washington League of Women Voters; Amy Wheelless, NW Energy Coalition; Poppy Storm, Ecotope; Chris van Daalen, Northwest EcoBuilding Guild; and Mark Frankel, New Buildings Institute.

(Opposed) Jan Himebaugh, Building Industry Association of Washington.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.