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**SENATE BILL 5491**

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**State of Washington**

**68th Legislature**

**2023 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Salomon, Shewmake, Frame, Lias, and Stanford

Read first time 01/20/23. Referred to Committee on Local Government,  
Land Use & Tribal Affairs.

1 AN ACT Relating to allowing for residential buildings of a  
2 certain height to be served by a single exit under certain  
3 conditions; and amending RCW 19.27.060.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 **Sec. 1.** RCW 19.27.060 and 2018 c 302 s 2 are each amended to  
6 read as follows:

7 (1) The governing bodies of counties and cities may amend the  
8 codes enumerated in RCW 19.27.031 as amended and adopted by the state  
9 building code council as they apply within their respective  
10 jurisdictions, but the amendments shall not result in a code that is  
11 less than the minimum performance standards and objectives contained  
12 in the state building code except as provided in subsections (2) and  
13 (3) of this section.

14 (a) Except as provided in subsection (2) of this section, no  
15 amendment to a code enumerated in RCW 19.27.031 as amended and  
16 adopted by the state building code council that affects single-family  
17 or multifamily residential buildings shall be effective unless the  
18 amendment is approved by the building code council under RCW  
19 19.27.074(1)(b).

20 (b) Any county or city amendment to a code enumerated in RCW  
21 19.27.031 which is approved under RCW 19.27.074(1)(b) shall continue

1 to be effective after any action is taken under RCW 19.27.074(1)(a)  
2 without necessity of reapproval under RCW 19.27.074(1)(b) unless the  
3 amendment is declared null and void by the council at the time any  
4 action is taken under RCW 19.27.074(1)(a) because such action in any  
5 way altered the impact of the amendment.

6 (2) The legislative body of a county or city, in exercising the  
7 authority provided under subsection (1) of this section to amend the  
8 code enumerated in RCW 19.27.031(1)(b), may adopt amendments that  
9 eliminate any minimum gross floor area requirement for single-family  
10 detached dwellings or that provide a minimum gross floor area  
11 requirement below the minimum performance standards and objectives  
12 contained in the state building code.

13 (3) The legislative body of a county or city, in exercising the  
14 authority provided under subsection (1) of this section to amend the  
15 code enumerated in RCW 19.27.031(1)(b), may adopt amendments that  
16 allow for up to five stories of group R-2 occupancy to be served by a  
17 single exit under the following conditions:

18 (a) The building does not have more than six stories above grade  
19 plane;

20 (b) The building does not contain a boarding house;

21 (c) The building does not have more than four dwellings on any  
22 floor;

23 (d) The building is constructed with not less than one-hour fire-  
24 resistive construction and is also equipped throughout with an  
25 automatic sprinkler system in accordance with section 903.3.1.1 of  
26 the International Building Code. Residential-type sprinklers must be  
27 used in all habitable spaces in each dwelling unit;

28 (e) There are not more than two single exit stairway conditions  
29 on the same property for buildings four stories tall or higher;

30 (f) An exterior stairway or interior exit stairway is provided.  
31 The interior exit stairway, including any related exit passageway,  
32 must be pressurized in accordance with section 909.20 of the  
33 International Building Code. Doors in the stairway must swing into  
34 the interior exit stairway regardless of the occupant load served,  
35 provided that doors from the interior exit stairway to the building  
36 exterior are permitted to swing in the direction of exit travel;

37 (g) A corridor separates each dwelling unit entry/exit door from  
38 the door to an interior exit stairway, including any related exit  
39 passageway, on each floor. Dwelling unit doors must not open directly

1 into an interior exit stairway. Dwelling unit doors are permitted to  
2 open directly into an exterior stairway;

3 (h) There are not more than 20 feet of travel to the exit  
4 stairway from the entry/exit door of any dwelling unit;

5 (i) Travel distance measured in accordance with section 1017 of  
6 the International Building Code does not exceed 125 feet;

7 (j) The exit does not terminate in an egress court where the  
8 court depth exceeds the court width unless it is possible to exit in  
9 either direction to the public way;

10 (k) Elevators are pressurized in accordance with section 909.21  
11 of the International Building Code or open into elevator lobbies that  
12 comply with section 713.14 of the International Building Code. Where  
13 approved by the building official, natural ventilation is permitted  
14 to be substituted for pressurization where the ventilation would  
15 prevent the accumulation of smoke or toxic gases;

16 (l)(i) Other occupancies are permitted in the same building  
17 provided they comply with all other requirements of this subsection  
18 (3). Except as provided in (l)(ii) of this subsection, other  
19 occupancies must not communicate with the group R occupancy portion  
20 of the building or with the single-exit stairway;

21 (ii) Parking garages and occupied roofs accessory to the group R  
22 occupancy are permitted to communicate with the exit stairway;

23 (m) The exit serving the group R occupancy does not discharge  
24 through any other occupancy, including an accessory parking garage;  
25 and

26 (n) There are no openings within 10 feet of unprotected openings  
27 into the stairway other than required exit doors having a one-hour  
28 fire-resistance rating.

29 (4)(a) A city that intends to adopt amendments under subsection  
30 (3) of this section must meet the following criteria prior to  
31 adoption:

32 (i) The city is served by a municipal fire department or fire  
33 district; and

34 (ii) The city does not have a current restriction on development  
35 due to lack of fire flow capacity as set forth in WAC 246-290-221.  
36 Minimum fire flow capacity must be at least 750 gallons per minute  
37 for 60 minutes, as set forth in WAC 246-293-640.

38 (b) Nothing in this subsection precludes a city from making a  
39 determination that the city does not have appropriate fire apparatus  
40 or hydrant networks to serve single stairwell buildings.

1        (5) Except as permitted or provided otherwise under this section,  
2 the state building code shall be applicable to all buildings and  
3 structures including those owned by the state or by any governmental  
4 subdivision or unit of local government.

5        ~~((4))~~ (6) The governing body of each county or city may limit  
6 the application of any portion of the state building code to exclude  
7 specified classes or types of buildings or structures according to  
8 use other than single-family or multifamily residential buildings.  
9 However, in no event shall fruits or vegetables of the tree or vine  
10 stored in buildings or warehouses constitute combustible stock for  
11 the purposes of application of the uniform fire code. A governing  
12 body of a county or city may inspect facilities used for temporary  
13 storage and processing of agricultural commodities.

14        ~~((5))~~ (7) No provision of the uniform fire code concerning  
15 roadways shall be part of the state building code: PROVIDED, That  
16 this subsection shall not limit the authority of a county or city to  
17 adopt street, road, or access standards.

18        ~~((6))~~ (8) The provisions of the state building code may be  
19 preempted by any city or county to the extent that the code  
20 provisions relating to the installation or use of sprinklers in jail  
21 cells conflict with the secure and humane operation of jails.

22        ~~((7))~~ (9)(a) Effective one year after July 23, 1989, the  
23 governing bodies of counties and cities may adopt an ordinance or  
24 resolution to exempt from permit requirements certain construction or  
25 alteration of either group R, division 3, or group M, division 1  
26 occupancies, or both, as defined in the uniform building code, 1988  
27 edition, for which the total cost of fair market value of the  
28 construction or alteration does not exceed fifteen hundred dollars.  
29 The permit exemption shall not otherwise exempt the construction or  
30 alteration from the substantive standards of the codes enumerated in  
31 RCW 19.27.031, as amended and maintained by the state building code  
32 council under RCW 19.27.070.

33        (b) Prior to July 23, 1989, the state building code council shall  
34 adopt by rule, guidelines exempting from permit requirements certain  
35 construction and alteration activities under (a) of this subsection.

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