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## Local Government & Housing Committee

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### HB 1060

**Brief Description:** Updating the weatherization statute.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Liias, Walsh, Simpson, Ericks, Ormsby, Miloscia, Nelson, Rolfes, Conway, Wood, Kenney, Chase, Moeller and Upthegrove; by request of Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Brief Summary of Bill</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Modifies definitions and operational requirements of the low-income residential weatherization program.</li></ul>
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**Hearing Date:** 1/22/09

**Staff:** Ethan Moreno (786-7386)

**Background:**

In 1987, the Legislature established the low-income residential weatherization program (program). The voluntary program seeks to achieve monetary and energy savings for low-income households and other energy consumers by directing public and private weatherization resources from sponsoring entities or other sources to low income households. For the purpose of the weatherization program, low-income is defined as being at or below 125 percent of the federally established poverty level.

Weatherization services provided under the program include the application of energy efficiency measures to qualifying residences, in accordance with technical and building code requirements.

Examples include:

- insulating ceilings, walls, floors, and ducts;
- closing air gaps that allow heat to escape; and
- modifying heating systems to improve efficiency.

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In addition to establishing the program, operational requirements, and a low-income weatherization account in the state treasury, the 1987 legislation charged the Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development (DCTED) with administering the program, soliciting proposals for low-income weatherization programs from potential sponsors, and adopting associated rules.

### **Summary of Bill:**

Definitions and operational requirements of the low-income residential weatherization program are modified.

#### Definitions

- The definition of "low-income" is modified by removing references to the federal poverty level and authorizing the DCTED to define the term.
- The definitions of "sponsor" and "weatherizing agency" are modified to allow tribal nations to qualify under both terms.
- The defined term "weatherization" is changed to "sustainable residential weatherization or weatherization." "Sustainable residential weatherization or weatherization" is defined as:
  - using funds administered by the DCTED to preserve a dwelling unit occupied by a low-income household for activities and materials that result in energy and resource conservation and energy efficiency improvements;
  - repair, indoor air quality, and health and safety investments; and
  - client education.

Furthermore, to the extent feasible, the funds administered by the DCTED must be used to support and advance sustainable technologies.

#### Operational Requirements.

Sponsor proposal requirements are modified. A provision obligating sponsor proposals for low-income weatherization programs to state the amount requested from the low-income weatherization account is deleted. Sponsor proposals also must provide that full levels of all cost-effective, structurally feasible, and sustainable weatherization materials, measures, and practices are utilized when a residence is weatherized.

The DCTED, in allocating funds from the low-income weatherization account, must:

- achieve the greatest possible expected monetary and energy savings by low-income households and other energy consumers over the longest period of time;
- identify and correct, to the extent practical, health and safety problems for residents of low-income households; and
- leverage, to the extent feasible, environmentally friendly sustainable technologies, practices, and designs.

Criteria for distributing the program among different regions and household characteristics are modified to encourage the use of energy efficient and sustainable technologies.

The program-related rule requirements for the DCTED are modified. The rules must ensure that the benefits of weatherization assistance, benefits that are expressly specified to include utility bill reduction and the preservation of affordable housing stock, accrue primarily to low-income tenants occupying a leased or rented residence.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

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