

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## ESHB 1555

---

---

### As Amended by the Senate

**Title:** An act relating to state building codes.

**Brief Description:** Finding that construction, reconstruction, and repair is best accomplished by having a statewide building code.

**Sponsors:** By House Committee on Local Government & Housing (originally sponsored by Representatives Dunshee, Mulliken, Cooper, Cairnes, Kirby and Mielke).

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Local Government & Housing: 1/16/02, 2/4/02 [DPS];  
Appropriations: 2/9/02 [DPS(LGH)].

**Floor Activity:**

Passed House: 2/19/02, 50-47.  
Senate Amended.  
Passed Senate: 3/8/02, 29-20.

**Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill**

- Revises the state building code by replacing specific uniform model codes and standards published by the International Conference of Building Officials and the International Fire Code Institute with uniform international codes and standards model codes published by the International Code Council Incorporated.

---

### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT & HOUSING

**Majority Report:** The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Dunshee, Chair; Edwards, Vice Chair; Berkey, Dunn, Hatfield, Mielke and Sullivan.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass. Signed by 4 members: Representatives Mulliken, Ranking Minority Member; Crouse, DeBolt and Kirby.

**Staff:** Kenny Pittman (786-7392).

---

## HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

**Majority Report:** The substitute bill by Committee on Local Government & Housing be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 15 members: Representatives Sommers, Chair; Doumit, 1st Vice Chair; Fromhold, 2nd Vice Chair; Buck, Cody, Dunshee, Grant, Kagi, Kenney, Kessler, Linville, McIntire, Ruderman, Schual-Berke and Tokuda.

**Minority Report:** Do not pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Sehlin, Ranking Minority Member; Alexander, Boldt, Clements, Cox, Lisk, Mastin, Pearson, Pflug and Talcott.

**Staff:** Linda Brooks (786-7153).

### **Background:**

The state building code consists of a series of uniform model codes and standards that regulate the construction, reconstruction and rehabilitation of residential, commercial, and industrial buildings and structures. These model codes are developed and published by the International Conference of Building Officials (Uniform Building Code and Uniform Mechanical Code), the International Fire Code Institute (Uniform Fire Code), and the International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials (Uniform Plumbing Code and Plumbing Code Standards).

The state building code also consists of adopted rules and regulations designed to make buildings and facilities accessible to and usable by the physically disabled or elderly persons and the state energy code. These uniform model codes and regulations are enforced by all counties, cities, and towns.

The State Building Code Council (SBCC) is responsible for the adoption and maintenance of the uniform model codes that comprise the state building code. The SBCC is required to regularly review updated versions of the uniform model codes and must amend the uniform model codes as appropriate. All decisions to adopt or amend the uniform model codes must be made prior to December 1 of any year and do not take effect before the end of the regular legislative session the next year.

The SBCC completed the update and adoption process of the state building code in November 2000. The uniform model code update process is based on a three-year cycle. The current uniform codes and standards that comprise the state building code took effect on July 1, 2001.

The International Code Council (ICC) was established in 1994, as a nonprofit organization that developed a single set of comprehensive and coordinated national model construction codes. The founding organizations of the ICC are Building Officials and

Code Administrators International, Inc. (BOCA), International Conference of Building Officials (ICBO), and Southern Building Code Congress International, Inc. (SBCCI). These organizations represent the three major model code writing organizations and have developed the model codes used throughout a majority of the country.

**Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill:**

Expresses legislative findings that the construction, reconstruction, and repair of residential, commercial, and industrial buildings and structures is best accomplished by having a state-wide building code.

**EFFECT OF SENATE AMENDMENT(S):**

Effect of Senate Amendment: The Senate amendment removes the House's brief intent section and revises the state building code by replacing reference to specific uniform building, mechanical and fire codes and standards published by the International Conference of Building Officials to the International building, residential, mechanical, fire codes published by the International Code Council, Inc.

The reference to the uniform plumbing code is not changed, but specific reference to non-adoption of provisions that affect sewers or fuel gas piping is specified.

The state building code council is required to solicit input from first responders (fire fighters, emergency response personnel, etc) to ensure that worker safety issues are addressed during the council's code adoption process.

The effective date of the revised state building code is delayed to July 1, 2003.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on February 6, 2002.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed, except for sections 1, 2 and 4, which take effect July 1, 2003.

**Testimony For:** (Local Government & Housing) Adoption of the international codes will provide the citizens with a better product. We need to replace the current set of outdated uniform codes and code standards with the new codes and standards developed by the International Code Council. These codes and standards represent the latest in technology changes in the construction industry. The three major code writing organizations did a good job in incorporating the code. However, if there are any conflicts between the codes, the state building code council will work them out during its code review and adoption process.

**Testimony For:** (Appropriations) This bill is supported by the State Building Code Council. It represents over three years worth of study on this issue. New codes have been published. The model code organization stopped updating the uniform code in 1997, so we are under a 1997 code that is getting further out of date as each year passes.

**Testimony Against:** (Local Government & Housing) The international codes are flawed. The construction industry was not involved in the development of these codes. The state should wait until the other code writing organizations have completed the development of their codes and standards and then choose a code that is the best for the state. The international codes will add between \$2,000 to \$5,000 to the cost of a housing. The international codes are also more restrictive than the current codes. There are major code conflicts in the international codes with the state's energy and electrical codes.

**Testimony Against:** (Appropriations) None.

**Testified:** (Local Government & Housing) (In support) Representative Dunshee, prime sponsor; David Saunders, State Building Code Council; Mark Martin, Washington Association of Building Officials; N. Sue Alden, State Building Code Council, representing Architects; Duane Mals, Washington State Association of Fire Chiefs; David Lynan, Washington State Association of Fire Marshals; Cliff Webster, Architects and Engineers Legislative Council; Michael Smith American Institute of Architects; Michael Valley, Structure Engineers Association of Washington; Ralph W. Johns, Tacoma Fire Department; and Rick Slunaker, American General Contractors.

(Opposed) Dan McDonald, Building Industry Association of Washington and McDonald Construction; Brian Minnich, Building Industry Association of Washington; Edwin Andrews, Andrews Mechanical; Joe Sternola, National Propane Gas Association; William M. Wright, Washington State Association of Plumbers and Pipefitters; Mark Tullis, Citizen; Larry Stevens Mechanical Contractors Association and National Electrical Contractors Association; Brian Garvey, Mechanical Contractors Association; Dwight Perkins, International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials; Ray Bizal and Robert Miller, National Electrical Contractors Association; Jim Simmons, Washington Electric Board; Joe Andre, National Electrical Manufacturers Association; and Richard King, IBEW.

**Testified:** (Appropriations) Tim Nogler, State Building Code Council; and Mark Triplett, Washington Association of Building Officials.