

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESB 5450

As Passed House:
February 27, 2018

Title: An act relating to use of cross-laminated timber for building construction.

Brief Description: Concerning the use of mass timber for building construction.

Sponsors: Senators Liias, Warnick, Ranker, Fain, Miloscia, Zeiger, Wilson, McCoy, Chase, Mullet and Frockt.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Local Government: 2/21/18, 2/22/18 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/27/18, 91-6.

Brief Summary of Engrossed Bill

- Requires the State Building Code Council to adopt rules for the use of mass timber products for building construction.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Appleton, Chair; McBride, Vice Chair; Griffey, Ranking Minority Member; Pike, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Gregerson, Peterson and Taylor.

Staff: Yvonne Walker (786-7841).

Background:

The State Building Code.

The State Building Code (SBC) establishes minimum statewide performance standards and requirements for building construction and construction materials in the state, consistent with accepted standards of engineering, fire, and life safety. The SBC is comprised of a number of model codes and standards, which are adopted by reference in the State Building Code Act

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.

(Act). Model codes and standards adopted in the Act include the International Building Code, the International Residential Code, the Uniform Plumbing Code, and the Uniform Plumbing Code Standards.

The State Building Code Council (Council), consisting of local government officials as well as building industry and public representatives, is responsible for adopting, amending, and maintaining, as appropriate, the model codes and standards adopted by reference in the Act. Amendments to the model codes and standards adopted by the Council are codified in the Washington Administrative Code. The Council regularly reviews and publishes updated editions of each model code and standard every three years.

Mass Timber.

Mass timber is generally a term used to describe pre-engineered wood products that typically involve the lamination and compression of multiple layers to create solid panels of wood. Mass timber products are generally used to frame a building's walls, floors and roofs and are seen as an alternative to steel and concrete products in the construction of buildings.

Summary of Bill:

The State Building Code Council must adopt rules for the use of mass timber products for residential and commercial building construction. The rules must take into consideration applicable national and international standards.

"Mass timber products" means a type of building component or system that uses large panelized wood construction. This includes cross-laminated timber, nail-laminated timber, glue-laminated timber, laminated strand timber, dowel-laminated timber, laminated veneer lumber, structural composite lumber, and wood concrete composites.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Mass timber, developed in Europe, is primarily cross-laminated timber (CLT) and glue-laminated beams. Cross-laminated timber products benefit both rural and urban communities. Producing CLT not only creates jobs but also produces healthy forests. Although steel and concrete products are necessary and effective, they are heavy to use. In urban communities that are rapidly growing, CLT is a product used to build high-rise structures quickly and cost effectively. Its products are safe and have a lower impact on neighborhoods. Cross-laminated timber building materials offer numerous benefits including the ability to reduce hazardous fields, support forest restoration efforts, support rural economic development, lower construction costs in cities, and potentially reduce carbon emissions.

Washington can be a leader in this industry by adopting rules in the State Building Code so that CLT products can be used more widely. The technology for CLT is available and there is demand for it. Numerous public-private coalitions such as Katerra (a manufacturing and construction company), state agencies, public research institutions, environmental groups, timber stakeholders, and private architecture, engineering, and construction partners have collaborated over the years to elevate the conversations regarding this new mass timber technology. Many cities, building and fire officials, and staff have also worked together to discuss the use of mass timber products and as a result, the use of these products needs more formal inclusion in statute.

This bill is about the future and bringing new technology and jobs to rural areas. Last summer officials from the Port of Port Angeles (home to the carbon recycling center) travelled to British Columbia to visit with a CLT producer. They learned that although this bill is catching up to where many places in the world already are, this legislation will help the state and the communities around the state learn from the new technology and the new science that is emerging today.

(Opposed) The masonry industry does not support product preferences. This bill leads into that world of product preferences. This bill is saying that the State Building Code Council (Council) must make rules regarding the specific timber products referenced in the bill; however, this bill is about more than just CLT. It is not fair to move a particular product to the front of the line of the Council and their decision-making. The masonry industry can be neutral on this bill if the amendment relating to the International Code Council process is adopted.

All industries would love to have the Legislature step in and help them become more competitive and create more jobs. However, anytime there is a new product, it must be vetted through a national and international process. Many products that are acceptable overseas are not acceptable here in the United States, especially in Washington because of the state's seismic issues. The bottom line is that CLT products need to go through the same process as any other new product so that they are competitive. Allowing one product go to the front of the line disenfranchises other products currently on the market. The Legislature should let the Council do the job it has been set forth to do.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Todd Beyreuther, Katerra; Russ Vaagen, Vaagen Timbers; Matt Ojala, Fonterra; Tom Bugert, The Nature Conservancy; and Bruce Beckett, Port of Port Angeles.

(Opposed) Tonia Neal, International Masonary Institute and Masonary Institute of Washington.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.