

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESHB 2506

As Passed Legislature

Title: An act relating to the joint task force on green building.

Brief Description: Creating a joint task force on green building.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Agriculture & Ecology (originally sponsored by Representatives Romero, Linville, Fisher, Jarrett, Cody, Dickerson, Veloria, Barlean, Simpson, Rockefeller, Dunshee, Hunt, Cairnes, Schmidt, Edwards, Upthegrove, Miloscia, Anderson and Wood).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Agriculture & Ecology: 1/31/02, 2/7/02 [DPS].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/14/02, 68-29.

Passed Senate: 3/7/02, 48-0.

Passed Legislature.

Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill

- Creates a 10-member joint task force on green building codes and standards.
- Requires the joint task force to review green building standards in local government codes to determine effectiveness of standards and current system and identify potential for costs savings through low-impact development.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & ECOLOGY

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Linville, Chair; Hunt, Vice Chair; Cooper, Dunshee, Grant, Kirby and Quall.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 6 members: Representatives Schoesler, Ranking Minority Member; Chandler, Delvin, Holmquist, Roach and Sump.

Staff: Caroleen Dineen (786-7156).

Background:

"Green building" is a term currently used for programs that promote environmental conservation and sustainable development. The concept of green building incorporates development standards and building construction processes that promote resource conservation (including energy efficiency, renewable energy, and water conservation features), consider environmental impacts and waste minimization, create a healthy and comfortable environment, reduce operation and maintenance costs, and address issues such as historical preservation, access to public transportation, and other community infrastructure systems.

Green building initiatives have been developed by various federal and state agencies, and green building programs have been established by local governments throughout the United States.

Some Washington local governments and builders, including Kitsap County, Clark County, and the Master Builders Association of King and Snohomish Counties, have implemented green building programs.

Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill:

A task force on green building is created. The task force includes the following 10 members: two members of the House of Representatives; two members of the Senate; a representative of the Office of Community Development; and one representative each for cities, counties, the residential building industry, the commercial building industry, and the environment. The task force chair is authorized to appoint experts and advisors as nonvoting members.

The task force is required to complete a thorough study of cities and counties that offer green building programs and low-impact development codes to:

- determine program components that are effective and ineffective;
- determine incentives and disincentives to creating a program;
- study existing green building standards; and
- identify potential for low-impact development to reduce storm water management, road building, and other infrastructure costs.

The task force study must begin within 30 days of adjournment of the 2002 regular session. The task force is required to submit a final report, including findings and legislative recommendations, to the Legislature by January 1, 2003. The task force provisions expire March 30, 2003.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: (Original bill) A number of green building programs have begun in Washington, and this idea has been worked for years. Green building incorporates a lot of issues, and some think the national standards are too strict. We need to make sure that buildings labeled "green" meet the same set of standards. This bill will create a task force to study green building standards and to make recommendations for creating those standards.

Testimony Against: (With concerns) (Original bill) The first green building program through the National Association of Home Builders was developed in 1990. Green building is not a new idea. Washington has three of the 15 local green building programs in the nation. National standards exist; state standards may cause conflicts and overlap in what is already a very successful program. In light of the state's current budget constraints, resources should not be allocated to the task force to come up with additional recommendations.

Testified: (In support) Representative Romero, prime sponsor; and Bruce Wulkan, Puget Sound Water Quality Action Team.

(With Concerns) Jodi Slavik, Building Industry Association of Washington; and Jan Rohila, Building Industry Association of Washington.