

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5494

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Financial Institutions, Housing & Insurance, February 12, 2013

Title: An act relating to carbon monoxide alarms.

Brief Description: Concerning carbon monoxide alarms.

Sponsors: Senators Hobbs, Fain, Holmquist Newbry, Mullet, Dammeier and McAuliffe.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Financial Institutions, Housing & Insurance: 2/05/13, 2/12/13 [DPS, DNP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS, HOUSING & INSURANCE

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5494 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Hobbs, Chair; Mullet, Vice Chair; Benton, Ranking Member; Fain and Hatfield.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senator Nelson.

Staff: Alison Mendiola (786-7483)

Background: In 2009, the Legislature passed SSB 5561 which requires that carbon monoxide alarms be installed in all new construction. The statute deferred to the State Building Code Council (SBCC) to determine whether carbon monoxide alarms would be required in some or all rental properties by January 1, 2013.

The SBCC has issued a number of rulings on this issue. Most recently, the SBCC ruled that carbon monoxide alarms must be installed in all rental units by January 1, 2013. Some properties are exempt from this requirement.

Summary of Bill (Recommended Substitute): Residential occupancies must be equipped with carbon monoxide alarms by July 1, 2014.

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.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS, HOUSING & INSURANCE COMMITTEE (Recommended Substitute): The effective date of the bill is July 1, 2014. An emergency clause is added.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill: PRO: Since the original legislation passed in 2009, SBCC has issued four different rulings regarding whether or not all or some rental housing needs to be equipped with carbon monoxide alarms. Even a Seattle Times article published an incorrect summary of the requirements. The concern is for potential liability for landlords who are confused as to the current requirements for carbon monoxide alarms. The alarms should be required but we need time to educate landlords.

CON: Compared to other states that require carbon monoxide alarms, Washington has been the slowest to implement the law. California has the largest rental market and they implemented the law in 19 months. To push back the effect date again would bring the total implementation time to 68 months, which is too long to wait. This legislation was in response to tragedies that occurred during the 2008 wind storm.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Joe Puckett, WA Multifamily Housing Assn.

CON: Megan Schrader, Kidde Fire Safety.