

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6018

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Commerce & Labor, February 3, 2014

Title: An act relating to the training of code enforcement officials.

Brief Description: Concerning the training of code enforcement officials.

Sponsors: Senators Fraser and Chase.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Commerce & Labor: 1/31/14, 2/03/14 [DP, DNP, w/oRec].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE & LABOR

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Conway, Ranking Member; Hasegawa, Hewitt and Kohl-Welles.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Holmquist Newbry, Chair; Braun, Vice Chair.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senator King.

Staff: Edith Rice (786-7444)

Background: Code officials safeguard the public health and safety through the development, enforcement, and administration of Washington State building construction codes and standards adopted by the state Building Code Council, and ordinances at the county, city, and town level. The code official apprenticeship program was developed and adopted to provide a structured system of education, training, and employment in the area of construction code administration and enforcement. This program provides for a structured post-secondary education strategy, combined with on-the-job training, to pass on the collective skills, knowledge, experience, and wisdom of code officials currently active in the industry to assure a common foundation for future generations of construction code officials, including but not limited to building officials, building plans examiners, and building inspectors. The downturn in the economy resulted in staff reductions in many local code enforcement offices. Some anticipate that there will be an increased need for code officials as the economy improves.

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.

Summary of Bill: A code official apprenticeship and training account is created in the state treasury. A fee of \$2 must be paid on each city or county building permit. Once \$50 has accumulated, each city and county must remit the funds to the state treasury quarterly. Revenue that is collected must be distributed to the sponsor of an apprenticeship program for building officials for establishing and operating the code official apprenticeship program, administrative expenses of the joint apprenticeship training committee, and other expenses.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

[OFM requested ten-year cost projection pursuant to I-960.]

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Enforcement of building codes is fundamentally important to prevent future problems and unanticipated liability. This makes good sense. This would have a positive impact on the workforce, it is the first of its kind in the nation. Even its detractors think it is a good idea. Two dollars is a reasonable fee. The bill proposes a long-term funding source for an apprenticeship training program which is currently unfunded by the state, and recognizes the need to proactively engage in succession planning.

CON: We do not want building permits to turn into a Christmas tree for unfunded needs. We were OK with the original proposal for a \$1 fee, now it has turned into \$2. There are others who benefit from these services and perhaps they should pay. The bill needs sunset language for the proposed fee.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Fraser, primary sponsor, Amy Brackenbury, WA Assn. of Building Officials; Andy Higgins, WA Assn. of Building Officials, City of Seattle; Gary Allsup, WA Assn. of Building Officials, City of Lacey; Kraig Stevenson, International Code Council; Stan Bowman, American Institute of Architects WA Council.

CON: Laura Merrill, WA State Assn. Counties; Jan Himebaugh, Building Industry Assn. of WA.