

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 3141

As Reported by House Committee On:
Housing

Title: An act relating to sustainable residential weatherization for low-income households.

Brief Description: Concerning sustainable residential weatherization for low-income households.

Sponsors: Representatives Lias, Chase, Ericks, Loomis, Rolfes, Miloscia, Upthegrove, Appleton, Dickerson, Kenney and Ormsby.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Housing: 1/28/08, 1/30/08 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Directs the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development to promote the use of sustainable technologies that are environmentally friendly in its low-income housing programs, including the Weatherization Program.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 6 members: Representatives Miloscia, Chair; Springer, Vice Chair; Armstrong, Ranking Minority Member; Lias, McCune and Ormsby.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 1 member: Representative Schindler.

Staff: Robyn Dupuis (786-7166).

Background:

The Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (DCTED) operates the state Weatherization Program which contracts with community non-profit agencies to make cost-effective energy conservation improvements on low-income homes in order to reduce the utility costs of low-income families. On average, the weatherization of homes reduces home energy costs by 25 percent.

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.

Weatherization services provided include:

- (a) ceiling, wall, floor, and duct insulation;
- (b) diagnostically driven air sealing to close gaps where the home's heat can escape; and
- (c) heating system efficiency modifications.

The Weatherization Program is funded through federal, state, and private sources.

Summary of Bill:

The DCTED Weatherization Program

The DCTED must choose amongst proposals from agencies interested in participating in the Weatherization Program so as to:

- (a) achieve the greatest possible energy savings by low-income households over the greatest period of time;
- (b) promote the greatest possible health and safety improvements for residents of low-income households; and
- (c) leverage, to the extent possible, technologically advanced and environmentally friendly sustainable technologies, practices, and designs.

The DCTED must encourage the utilization of fuels representing energy efficient sustainable technologies through the Weatherization Program.

The DCTED Housing Programs

The DCTED is directed to continually strive, through all of its housing programs, to be a leader within the state in promoting and utilizing technologically advanced and environmentally friendly sustainable technologies, practices, and designs.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This bill is consistent with the direction the DCTED Weatherization and other housing programs are moving and should be moving. It also supports the climate change initiatives proposed by the Governor's office. By placing an emphasis on utilizing sustainable technologies, the DCTED will encourage local contractors to experiment with new tools to increase the energy efficiency, health, and safety of homes. This is a real opportunity to be innovative and try new methods that could have a dramatic impact on individual homeowners and their communities.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Liias, prime sponsor; Steve Payne, Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development; David Finet, Opportunity Council; Joel Gregory, King County Housing Authority; and Charles Eberdt, The Energy Project.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.