
HOUSE BILL 2864

State of Washington

65th Legislature

2018 Regular Session

By Representative Eslick

Read first time 01/18/18. Referred to Committee on Local Government.

1 AN ACT Relating to preventing fires in rental dwelling units; and
2 creating a new section.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that over the last
5 ten years, Washington has seen an increasing shift from homeowners to
6 renters in major metropolitan areas and smaller cities and towns.
7 Many of these rentals are in low density, single-family homes, or low
8 density multifamily buildings. As more renters enter the market,
9 rental costs have increased by over thirty percent, forcing people to
10 look for more affordable places to live. With new rental units coming
11 on the market in former single-family homes, many do not meet current
12 fire safety standards. In Washington, four out of five fire deaths
13 occur in residential dwelling units. Smoke alarms have become such a
14 common feature in homes that it is easy to take them for granted, but
15 properly installed and maintained smoke alarms save lives. Despite
16 requirements for landlords to equip rental dwelling units with smoke
17 detection devices, and tenants to maintain smoke detectors in
18 accordance with manufacturer's recommendations, tragedies still
19 occur.

20 Therefore, the legislature directs the Washington director of
21 fire protection to investigate ways to prevent fire deaths in rental

1 dwellings, educate landlords and tenants regarding their
2 responsibilities, develop possible criminal penalties, evaluate
3 insurance certification requirements or changes to the building code,
4 and other possible programs or funding that would improve
5 installation and maintenance of smoke detectors in rental apartments
6 and single-family homes.

7 The director of fire protection must form a task force of
8 stakeholders including but not limited to landlords of residential
9 units, tenants, local governments, firefighters, representatives from
10 home builders and construction trades, the insurance industry, and a
11 nonprofit that provides free smoke detectors and installation. The
12 task force shall choose its chair from among its membership. The
13 director of fire protection must convene the initial meeting of the
14 task force. The task force must allow for public comments. The task
15 force shall update the appropriate committees of the legislature by
16 December 1, 2019. The task force shall report its findings and
17 recommendations to the governor and the appropriate committees of the
18 legislature by December 1, 2020.

--- END ---