

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6223

As of January 30, 2026

Title: An act relating to authorizing community scaled weatherization projects.

Brief Description: Authorizing community scaled weatherization projects.

Sponsors: Senators Hunt, Harris, Nobles and Saldaña.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Environment, Energy & Technology: 1/30/26.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Adds community scaled projects as project types eligible for funding under the Low-Income Weatherization Program.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY & TECHNOLOGY

Staff: Kimberly Cushing (786-7421)

Background: Low-Income Weatherization Program. The Department of Commerce (Commerce) administers the Low-Income Weatherization Program (Program). The Program distributes grant funding to project sponsors to provide low-income households with weatherization services.

To qualify for weatherization services, the income of the household being served must not exceed 80 percent of the county median income, adjusted for household size. Commerce must give priority to projects that serve households with incomes at or below 125 percent of the federal poverty level.

Sponsors of weatherization projects include local community action agencies, tribal nations, local governments, and other types of entities. Weatherization services may include home energy efficiency improvements, repairs, indoor air quality measures, and health and safety

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improvements. Full levels of all cost-effective, structurally feasible, sustainable weatherization improvements, as determined by Commerce, must be provided when a low-income residence is weatherized.

Summary of Bill: Weatherization grant funding and matching funds may be used for community scaled projects. A community scaled project is a weatherization project that includes multiple dwelling units in the same neighborhood or area where overlapping factors such as environmental, social, or economic conditions may adversely impact residents, as determined by Commerce.

A community scaled project may provide for full or partial weatherization, energy efficiency measures, or structural rehabilitation and repairs. A project sponsor must identify priority communities using indicators that include data reflecting environmental health disparities, housing vulnerability, and pollution exposure.

Community scaled projects are excluded from the requirement that all units receiving weatherization services in a project be occupied by low-income households. When selecting community scaled projects, Commerce must consider socioeconomic data to prioritize those that serve low-income households.

Commerce must approve or deny a proposal for grant funding for a community scaled project within 90 days of the closing application period.

The Program is subject to the availability of amounts appropriated. Commerce is authorized to adopt rules to implement the Program.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 24, 2026.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Weatherization is a win-win. It saves folks money, is good for the environment, increases community resilience, reduces strain on our electrical grid, and is something we can do right away to deliver these benefits to our communities. The bill would expand the kinds of projects that are eligible for the existing program in rural areas and mobile home parks. This bill creates a practical pathway to scale weatherization projects as the needs demands while improving health, safety and stability for households across Washington. This bill is about people: seniors trying to age in place, families with young children in older homes, and households facing overlapping environmental, economic, and housing challenges that make basic stability harder to maintain. This is not an overhaul but a thoughtful evolution of a program that already works

and allows limited resources to go further and strengthen entire communities rather than addressing one home at a time. Washington's State Energy Strategy called for weatherizing all low-income homes to meet the challenges of climate change, and we need to be working multiple times faster than we are to achieve that goal. We must ensure that all residents are included as our state transitions to a clean energy economy. This bill allows weatherization agencies to carry out larger community-scale projects, which will generate more competitive bids from contractors, lowering costs, and helping attract contractors to rural and remote areas. Our state urgently needs progress on reducing climate pollution from the built environment and this bill supports cost effective action toward that goal.

OTHER: The current Program has a strong track record of delivering energy savings, improving resident health and safety, and preserving affordable housing in Washington. The bill builds on those successes by increasing flexibility to more fully address community needs. Updating program guidelines and statutes would allow Commerce to use more sophisticated tools to determine eligibility.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Victoria Hunt, Prime Sponsor; Linda Garcia, Washington State Community Action Partnership; John Seng, Spark Northwest; Caitlin Krenn, Washington Conservation Action.

OTHER: Allen Carbert, Washington State Department of Commerce.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.