
**Technology, Energy & Communications
Committee**

ESSB 6244

Brief Description: Defining a green home and an energy efficient home.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Environment, Water & Energy (originally sponsored by Senators Fraser, Rockefeller, Marr, Ranker, Pridemore, Kohl-Welles, Shin and Kline).

Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill

- Requires the State Building Code Council to adopt by rule a definition for a green home and an energy efficient home.

Hearing Date: 2/17/10

Staff: Kara Durbin (786-7133).

Background:

The concept of "green building," also known as green construction or sustainable building, is the practice of building structures and using processes that use energy, water, and natural resources efficiently and that are resource-efficient throughout a building's life-cycle. Green buildings are designed to reduce the overall impact of the built environment on human health and the natural environment by reducing waste, pollution, and environmental impacts.

There are national and state associations for green and sustainable home builders that provide assistance to those builders that choose to use environmentally friendly building practices in constructing homes that are energy and resource efficient. These associations have standards and verification processes to ensure that homes are built to meet certain energy efficiency, water use, and health and indoor air criteria. Some associations provide varying levels of certification depending on the criteria met during construction and features included in the building. Third-party verification is an option in some programs to evaluate and authenticate information provided by the builder and achievement of a specified level of performance.

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:

By December 1, 2011, the State Building Code Council (Council), in collaboration with interested stakeholders, must:

1. review local and nationally recognized green building and energy efficiency programs, standards, and codes that establish criteria for energy efficiency, indoor air quality, and environmental responsibility, and that provide varying levels of green home certification;
2. review local or national green building and energy efficiency programs, standards, and codes establishing national accreditation or certification criteria for third-party inspection firms for compliance with the green building or energy efficiency programs;
3. evaluate the feasibility of creating a residential energy code appendix; and
4. identify and evaluate the impacts to local jurisdictions required to implement the definitions of green home and energy efficient homes.

The Council must provide a report to the Legislature that includes recommendations for: (1) the expected percent of energy efficiency gains above the national model energy codes; (2) facilitating implementation by local jurisdictions of the definitions for energy efficient home and green home; and (3) consideration of the embodied energy consumption in differing types of construction materials.

By December 1, 2012, the Council must adopt rules to define a green home and an energy efficient home. The definitions must be developed in consideration of the information and recommendations gained from the review of local and national energy efficient and green home criteria.

The Council must review its rules every three years, consistent with its reviews and updates to the State Energy Code. The review must be included as an element of the Washington State Energy Code Progress Report. The definitions for green home and energy efficient home must be reviewed in 2030, and the definitions expire in 2031, unless extended by the Legislature.

The Council, after considering the feasibility of creating a residential energy code appendix, may publish an appendix of the requirements for an energy efficient home for each revised edition of the State Energy Code. In addition, the Council must provide compliance methods using prescriptive, component performance, and systems analysis approaches, and prescribe labels for an energy efficient home consistent with requirements of the State Energy Code.

A local building department or a third-party inspector approved by a local building department may review plans and inspect energy efficient homes.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available on the Substitute Senate Bill. A fiscal note on the Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill was requested on February 17, 2010.

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