



STATE OF WASHINGTON

STATE BUILDING CODE COUNCIL

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October 18, 2024

The Honorable Davina Duerr
House of Representatives
PO Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504

Dear Representative Duerr,

The State Building Code Council (Council) plays an important role in the State of Washington's design and construction industry. They provide consistent standards for construction to promote the health, safety and welfare of Washingtonians. Building codes are updated every three years to incorporate new studies, material innovations and other important advancements. Updating these codes requires great diligence to ensure they are coordinated, clear, concise, feasible, enforceable, and cost conscious.

In 1974, the Washington Legislature passed Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 2634 creating the State Building Code Council (SBCC) was created to amend, adopt, and implement the Codes enumerated in RCW 19.27.031 through robust public processes involving varied Washingtonian industry representatives and subject matter experts. This model of Code development and implementation has been extremely successful, leading to an advanced series of construction codes protecting the life and safety of Washingtonians.

~~ESSB 6109 passed during the 2018 Legislative Session added specific technical requirements for the International Wildland-Urban Interface Code (WUIC) in RCW 19.27.560. In the 2024 Legislative Session ESB 6120 passed and modified the same section in an attempt to address wildfire risk mapping. The updated risk mapping is fully supported by the Council.~~

~~The Council has been tasked with adoption and amendment of the codes enumerated in RCW 19.27.031, which includes the WUIC. By including technical provisions within the word of law, the Council is restricted from updating and providing continuity for Washington codes as the model codes are updated.~~

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~~This model of Code development and implementation has been extremely successful, leading to an advanced series of construction codes protecting the life and safety of Washingtonians.~~

~~Engrossed Senate Bill SB 6120 takes an unprecedented step in limits removing the authority bility of the State Building Code Council to amend the Code it is adopting Wildland-Urban Interface~~

Code(WUIC). This ~~limitation removal of authority~~ to engage the already established a robust public process to develop advanced Code language for Washingtonians by Washingtonians has never occurred since the creation of the Council in 1974.

Additionally, ~~Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill~~ SSB 6109 from 2018 and the ~~current~~ ESB ~~engrossed Senate Bill~~ 6120 ~~as proposed~~ created the only construction Code in an RCW via policy making in the political sphere rather than in a WAC via public rulemaking in the technical sphere.

Legislation that includes specific code language ~~and section numbers~~ freezes the code language in time, requiring a legislative update even when the model code or design and construction practices change to address the issue legislation was attempting to fix. Model codes are fluid, updates are made in response to issues identified from prior codes, and changes in technology and best practices include responses to issues raised in prior codes. ~~Section numbers are also updated frequently as code language and practice changes~~. The SBCC is the body best suited to provide updates and continuity for Washington codes as the model codes are updated.

The Council believes that removing the technical provisions from ~~the~~ RCW and providing the Council including with the legislative ~~intent~~ direction would be the most appropriate method to provide provisions for ignition resistant construction within RCW 19.27.560. As a suggestion the Council posits that RCW 19.27.560 be rewritten to remove the subsections of RCW 19.27.560 (1).

All Chapters and Appendices of the codes listed in RCW 19.27.031 should be available for adoption and amendment by the Council.

If you or your staff have any questions or concerns, or if additional information is needed, please contact Dustin Curb, SBCC Managing Director at (360) 972-4158, or dustin.curb@des.wa.gov.

Sincerely,

Daimon Doyle
Chair, State Building Code Council

Cc: Dustin Curb, State Building Code Council Manager
Ann Larson, Director of Government Relations, Department of Enterprise Services