

January 26, 2024

Senator Sam Hunt (D)
Chair
Committee on State Government & Elections
405 Legislative Building

Senator Jeff Wilson
Ranking Member
Committee on State Government & Elections
108 Legislative Modular Building

Re: IIBEC supports SB 6291 – Streamlining building code council operating procedures

Dear Chair Hunt and Ranking Member Wilson:

On behalf of the 3,500 members of the International Institute of Building Enclosure Consultants (IIBEC), and specifically the more than 100 IIBEC members who reside in Washington, please accept these comments regarding SB 6291, which would streamline the state building code council operating procedures by establishing criteria for statewide amendments to the state building code.

IIBEC is an association of design professionals, including architects, engineers, and consultants, who specialize in building enclosure projects. IIBEC members design, investigate, and manage roofing, exterior wall, and waterproofing systems and projects. IIBEC members act as advocates for the building on behalf of the owner or manager and ensure the building enclosure or roofing projects meet standards, codes, warranty requirements, and performance requirements.

IIBEC supports the development, evaluation, adoption, and enforcement of codes and standards that protect and improve public health, safety, welfare, and economic vitality and which promote the design, preservation, and construction of sustainable environments and high-performance buildings. IIBEC supports regulation by comprehensive, coordinated, and contemporary codes and standards that establish sound threshold values and are regularly updated and revised.

Additionally, IIBEC is a participating member of the International Code Council and supports the consensus driven process that includes the involvement of public and private sector interests to update the various model codes on a regular basis. Regular updates to the model codes take advantage of advances in analysis methods, technology, materials, and design loads for the safety and wellbeing of residents and users of buildings. Importantly, states are free to adopt all or parts of the model code as their state codes to best meet the needs of their citizens.

According to a 2019 report, the National Institute for Building Sciences' Natural Hazard Mitigation Saves report found that adhering to current codes saves \$11 for every \$1 spent. This finding is important because it means when disaster strikes, and unfortunately it does with regularity, updated codes will lessen the likelihood of injury and help your constituents and those communities repair and rebuild quicker and at a lower cost than if older building codes were in effect. Simply put, for your constituents, improving resiliency helps lessen the financial pain after the disaster has passed.

Additionally, updated codes that improve resiliency are very important for city and county buildings that house first responders, utilities, and buildings that could be used as an emergency HQ, hospital, or shelter when a disaster does happen.

Finally, the wildfire in Lahaina, Hawaii, that tragically recorded 100 deaths with four people still missingⁱ, has relevance here. An initial report from the Insurance Institute for Business and Home Safety found that older, dense construction with little fire resistance helped the fire spread rapidly. Importantly, the report also found that a new development, built between 2019 and 2020, largely survived the worst of the blazeⁱⁱ. This is just the most recent example proving that when disaster strikes, buildings constructed under more modern codes survive better, which also means their residents have a better chance of survival.

We strongly believe that when it comes to life, safety, and health issues, the government should act in the interest of preserving them. Improving building codes improves public safety. It is for these reasons that IIBEC endorses SB 6291, introduced by Sens. Linda Wilson, John Lovick, Perry Dozier, and Shelly Short. This commonsense legislation streamlines the code adoption process to help achieve regular, periodic updates of the building, residential, and mechanical codes for the state of Washington and the benefit of its residents.

If IIBEC can be of any service going forward, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,



Brian Pallasch, CAE
Executive Vice President & CEO



Darci Krumpas
President
IIBEC Puget Sound Chapter

Cc: Senator Javier Valdez
Senator Perry Dozier
Senator Phil Fortunato
Senator Bob Hasegawa
Senator Patty Kuderer
Senator Linda Wilson
Senator John Lovick
Senator Shelly Short

ⁱ <https://www.cnn.com/2023/11/18/us/maui-fires-100-days/index.html>

ⁱⁱ <https://ibhs.org/wp-content/uploads/IBHSEarlyInsights-LahainaFire.pdf>