

# LAWMAKER REVIEW



**BUILDING INDUSTRY**  
ASSOCIATION OF WASHINGTON  
CHAMPIONS OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING

## HIGHER RESIDENTIAL ENERGY CODE SB 5293

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[SB 5293](#) will be heard Wednesday, Jan. 23 in the Senate Environment and Energy Committee. The Governor has requested legislation on building energy efficiency. Most of the bill deals with large commercial spaces and developing a retrofit program. However, BIAW has significant opposition regarding the proposals changes to the residential energy code.

Unfortunately, this bill would allow local jurisdictions to adopt a higher residential energy code than the state code, balkanizing the energy codes and potentially creating a scenario where the other building codes will not fit together in a cohesive manner. Currently, Washington has one building code for supply, practice and training purposes, having multiple different codes in each jurisdiction is incredibly problematic.

In addition to creating balkanized energy codes around the state, this bill alters the cost-effectiveness requirement to new energy code proposals. Instead of requiring a proposal to be adopted that is cost-effective, it requires adoption that achieves the 2030 energy conservation goals at any cost.

The energy code is the largest cost driver of all the building codes, especially with the current goal of a 70 percent energy reduction from the 2006 code. Washington has made significant progress on this issue since the 2009 code and has updated and increased energy efficiency every three years since.

However, in the last code adoption cycle the State Building Code Council refused to the required energy analysis report to the legislature -- instead, they merely reported that "we're basically on track." With no specifics on what gains were made between the 2012 and 2015 energy code, how is Washington capable of knowing what else needs to be done? The "low hanging fruit" has been accomplished and while the goals are in place, they are required to be commercially available, practicably feasible and cost-effective. This bill changes all of that without even a baseline of where the state currently stands.

BIAW will testify in opposition to [SB 5293](#) on Wednesday, Jan. 23.