

SUBJECT: Updating municipal residential and commercial building codes

COMMITTEE: Land and Resource Management — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 7 ayes — Deshotel, Leman, Biedermann, Romero, Rosenthal, Spiller, Thierry
0 nays
2 absent — Burrows, Craddick

WITNESSES: For — Kelly Sadler, International Code Council; Cyrus Reed, Lone Star Chapter Sierra Club; Ned Muñoz, Texas Association of Builders
(Registered, but did not testify: Joe Woods, American Property and Casualty Insurance Association; Will McAdams, Associated Builders and Contractors of Texas; TJ Patterson, City of Fort Worth; Jon Schnautz, National Association of Mutual Insurance Companies (NAMIC); Paul Martin, Reinsurance Association of America; Beaman Floyd, Texas Coalition for Affordable Insurance Solutions; Georgia Keysor)

Against — None

On — *(Registered, but did not testify:* Heather Lagrone, Texas General Land Office)

DIGEST: CSHB 738 would adopt the 2012 versions of the International Residential Code and International Building Code as the municipal residential and commercial building codes, respectively, in the state.

In order to amend either of these codes, municipalities would be required to hold a public hearing and adopt any amendment by ordinance. The hearing would have to be held no later than the 14th day before the adoption of the amending ordinance. The bill would specify that such amendments could add, modify, or remove requirements set by the codes.

The bill would require municipalities to establish rules and take any other actions necessary to implement the building code updates before January 1, 2022.

The updated codes would apply only to construction, alteration, or repair that began under an agreement made on or after January 1, 2022, or that began, in the absence of an agreement, on or after that date.

CSHB 738 would establish that the adoption of the 2012 International Residential Code would not affect state law prohibiting municipalities and emergency services districts from requiring the installation of fire sprinkler systems in single family and two family homes.

The bill would take effect January 1, 2022, except for the provision requiring municipalities to establish rules and take other actions necessary to implement the building code updates before that date, which would take effect September 1, 2021.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

CSHB 738 would improve the safety and resiliency of buildings in the state by updating the statewide municipal residential and commercial building codes, which have not been updated since 2001.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey, the General Land Office and the Federal Emergency Management Agency published reports describing how buildings built to more modern standards fared better in the storm. While many larger cities in Texas have adopted even more recent versions of the International Residential and International Building Codes, many smaller cities have not reached the standards of the 2012 version. By adopting these updated codes as the statewide standard, the bill will help prevent loss of life and property damage by ensuring that new construction was built to higher, safer standards.

As in current law, this bill would allow cities to amend these codes, but would ensure that citizens had input by requiring a public hearing on any proposed changes.

CRITICS
SAY:

No concerns identified.