

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Community Affairs

BILL: SPB 7000

INTRODUCER: For consideration by Community Affairs Committee

SUBJECT: Florida Building Commission

DATE: January 17, 2017

REVISED: _____

ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1. Present	Yeatman		CA Submitted as Committee Bill

I. Summary:

SPB 7000 changes the process by which revisions are made to the Florida Building Code.

Current law requires the Florida Building Commission (Commission) to revise the Florida Building Code every 3 years to automatically adopt the most recent versions of the International Code Council I-Codes (I-Codes) and the International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) into the foundation of the Florida Building Code. Additionally, under current law, amendments and modifications to the Florida Building Code only remain in effect until the effective date of a new edition of the Florida Building Code.

Under the new process, the Commission will start with the current Florida Building Code and evaluate the changes made in the I-Codes and the IECC and adopt the changes the Commission deems appropriate. However, the Commission must maintain the efficiencies of the Florida Energy Efficiency Code for Building Construction. If amendments or modifications are made to the Florida Building Code, those amendments and modifications will be carried forward until the next edition of the Florida Building Code. The Florida Building Code updating process will remain on a 3-year cycle.

The proposed bill also requires the Commission to adopt the Florida Building Code by a three-fourths vote of the members present.

II. Present Situation:

The Florida Building Code and the Florida Building Commission

In 1974, Florida adopted a state minimum building code law requiring all local governments to adopt and enforce a building code that would ensure minimum standards for the public's health and safety. Four separate model codes were available that local governments could consider and adopt. In that system, the state's role was limited to adopting all or relevant parts of new editions

of the four model codes. Local governments could amend and enforce their local codes as they desired.¹

In 1996, a study commission was appointed to review the system of local codes created by the 1974 law and to make recommendations for modernizing the entire system. The 1998 Legislature adopted the study commission's recommendations for a single state building code and an enhanced oversight role for the state in local code enforcement. The 2000 Legislature authorized implementation of the Florida Building Code, and that first edition replaced all local codes on March 1, 2002. In 2004, for the second edition of the Florida Building Code, the state adopted the International Code Council's I-Codes.² All subsequent Florida Building Codes have been adopted utilizing the I-Codes as the base code. The most recent Florida Building Code is the fifth edition which is referred to as the 2014 Florida Building Code. The 2014 Florida Building Code went into effect June 30, 2015.³

The Commission was statutorily created to implement the Florida Building Code. The Commission, which is housed within the Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR), is a 27-member technical body responsible for the development, maintenance, and interpretation of the Florida Building Code. The Commission also approves products for statewide acceptance. Members are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate and include design professionals, contractors, and government experts in the various disciplines covered by the Florida Building Code.⁴

Most substantive issues before the Commission are vetted through a workgroup process where consensus recommendations are developed and submitted by appointed representative stakeholder groups in an open process with several opportunities for public input.

According to the Commission,

General consensus is a participatory process whereby, on matters of substance, the members strive for agreements which all of the members can accept, support, live with or agree not to oppose. In instances where, after vigorously exploring possible ways to enhance the members' support for the final decision on substantive decisions, and the Commission finds that 100 percent acceptance or support is not achievable, final decisions require at least 75 percent favorable vote of all members present and voting.⁵

¹ The Florida Building Commission Report to the 2006 Legislature, *Florida Department of Community Affairs*, p. 4, available at http://www.floridabuilding.org/fbc/publications/2006_Legislature_Rpt_rev2.pdf (last visited Jan. 18, 2017).

² The International Code Council (ICC) is an association that develops model codes and standards used in the design, building, and compliance process to "construct safe, sustainable, affordable and resilient structures." The ICC publishes I-Codes: a complete set of model comprehensive, coordinated building safety and fire prevention codes, for all aspects of construction, that have been developed by ICC members. All 50 states have adopted the I-Codes.

³ Florida Building Commission Homepage, <https://floridabuilding.org/c/default.aspx> (last visited Jan. 18, 2017).

⁴ Section 553.74, F.S.

⁵ Florida Building Commission, Florida Building Commission Consensus-Building Process, available at http://www.floridabuilding.org/fbc/commission/FBC_0608/Commission/FBC_Discussion_and_Public_Input_Processes.htm (last visited Jan. 18, 2017).

Building Code Cycle

Pursuant to s. 553.73(7)(a), F.S., the Commission must update the Florida Building Code every 3 years. When updating the Florida Building Code, the Commission is required to use the most current version of the International Building Code, the International Fuel Gas Code, the International Mechanical Code, the International Plumbing Code, the International Residential Code, and the International Electrical Code. These I-Codes form the foundation codes of the updated Florida Building Code.

Any amendments or modifications to the foundation codes found within the Florida Building Code remain in effect only until the effective date of a new edition of the Florida Building Code, every 3 years.⁶ At that point, the amendments or modifications to the foundation codes are removed, unless the amendments or modifications are related to state agency regulations or are related to the wind-resistance design of buildings and structures within the high-velocity hurricane zone of Miami-Dade and Broward Counties, which are carried forward into the next edition of the Florida Building Code.

When a provision of the current Florida Building Code is not part of the foundation codes, an industry member or another interested party must resubmit the provision to the Commission during the Florida Building Code adoption process in order to be considered for the next edition of the Florida Building Code.⁷

Amendments between Cycles

Section 553.73(8), F.S., authorizes the Commission to approve amendments pursuant to the rule adoptions procedure in ch. 120, F.S., which are needed to address:

- Conflicts within the updated Florida Building Code;
- Conflicts between the updated Florida Building Code and the Florida Fire Prevention Code adopted pursuant to ch. 633, F.S.;
- Unintended results from the integration of the previously adopted Florida-specific amendments;
- Equivalency of standards;
- Changes to or inconsistencies with federal or state law; or
- Adoption of an updated edition of the National Electrical Code if the Commission finds that delay of implementing the updated edition causes undue hardship to stakeholders or otherwise threatens the public health, safety, and welfare.

However, the Commission may not approve amendments that would weaken the construction requirements relating to wind resistance or the prevention of water intrusion.

The Commission may also approve technical amendments to the Florida Building Code once a year for statewide or regional application if the amendment:⁸

- Is needed in order to accommodate the specific needs of Florida.

⁶ Section 553.73(7)(g), F.S.

⁷ Section 553.73(7)(g), F.S.

⁸ Section 553.73(9), F.S.

- Has a reasonable and substantial connection with the health, safety, and welfare of the general public.
- Strengthens or improves the Florida Building Code, or in the case of innovation or new technology, will provide equivalent or better products or methods or systems of construction.
- Does not discriminate against materials, products, methods, or systems of construction of demonstrated capabilities.
- Does not degrade the effectiveness of the Florida Building Code.

The 6th Edition of the Florida Building Code

The Commission is currently conducting its rule development process for the 6th edition of the Florida Building Code. Under s. 553.73(7)(e), F.S., a rule updating the Florida Building Code does not take effect until 6 months after the publication of the updated Florida Building Code. The 6th edition of the Florida Building Code is tentatively expected to go into effect on December 31, 2017.⁹

The 6th edition of the Florida Building Code will incorporate the latest version of the I-Codes (2015). The next edition of the I-Codes will be the 2018 I-Codes.

Voting Processes for the Technical Advisory Committees and the Commission

Under s. 553.73(3)(b), F.S., in order for a technical advisory committee to make a favorable recommendation to the Commission, the proposal must receive a three-fourths vote of the members present at the meeting, and at least half of the regular members must be present in order to conduct the meeting.

The Florida Administrative Code, under 61G20-2.002(7), F.A.C., provides a similar requirement for votes taken by the Commission. Specifically, the provision provides that “The decision of the Commission to approve a proposed amendment shall be by 75% vote. Those proposals failing to meet the vote requirement shall not be adopted.”

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

Section 1 amends s. 553.73, F.S., to require the Commission to use the 6th edition of the Florida Building Code as the foundation for the Florida Building Code. The Commission is required to consider whether the Florida Building Code needs to be revised and to adopt code revisions by rule. When evaluating potential revisions to the Florida Building Code, the Florida Building Commission shall review, rather than automatically adopt, the I-Codes every 3 years. The Commission shall also review the International Energy Conservation Code; however, the Commission must maintain the efficiencies of the Florida Energy Efficiency Code for Building Construction pursuant to s. 553.901, F.S.

⁹ 6th Edition (2017) FBC Code Update Development Tasks, *available at* http://www.floridabuilding.org/fbc/thecode/2017_Code_Development/Timelines/FBC_WorkplanOption1-2015.pdf (Last visited Jan. 18, 2017).

Amendments and modifications, other than local amendments under s. 553.73(4), F.S., to the Florida Building Code will now remain effective when a new edition of the Florida Building Code is published.

The bill removes references to Florida-specific amendments because the entire building code will now be Florida-specific. The bill also makes other conforming and clarifying changes in terminology.

Section 2 amends s. 553.76, F.S., to require the Commission to adopt the Florida Building Code, and amendments thereto, by a three-fourths vote of the members present.

Section 3 provides an effective date of July 1, 2017.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

Builders and building code officials may benefit from the increased continuity of the Florida Building Code and increased transparency of the code adoption process.

C. Government Sector Impact:

The Commission will have to review each change to the I-Codes and the IECC individually rather than approving wholesale changes to the Florida Building Code.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Statutes Affected:

This bill substantially amends sections 553.73 and 553.76 of the Florida Statutes.

IX. Additional Information:

A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Changes:

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

B. Amendments:

None.

This Senate Bill Analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's introducer or the Florida Senate.
