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## OLR Bill Analysis

### sHB 5401

#### ***AN ACT CONCERNING THE PROCEDURE FOR ADOPTING, REVISING AND AMENDING THE STATE BUILDING CODE AND REQUIRING RELATED TRAINING.***

#### **SUMMARY**

This bill makes several changes to when and under what circumstances the State Building Code may be amended. Among other things, it:

1. limits the frequency with which the code can be revised to once every six years or once per two full “model code cycles;”
2. requires publishing a projected schedule for proposed code revisions at least 18 months before the revision’s anticipated effective date;
3. prohibits the state building inspector and the Codes and Standards Committee from requiring, considering, approving, or adopting any new building standard from October 1, 2026, to October 1, 2032, unless doing so satisfies one of several prerequisites, such as being necessary to address an imminent threat to public health or life safety; and
4. restricts municipalities from adopting, and local building officials from enforcing, any building standard that is more restrictive than those in the code.

Under the bill, a “building standard” is any requirement that applies to the construction, alteration, addition, repair, or change of use or occupancy of any residential, commercial, institutional, industrial, or mixed-use building or structure.

The bill also requires the Department of Administrative Services commissioner to give training and code enforcement education for one

year after the effective date of any approved or deemed approved revision or amendment to the State Building Code. She must do so using the education and training and continual educational programs in the mechanics and application of the State Building Code that existing law already requires her to create for state and municipal code officials and candidates, architects, engineers, landscape architects, interior designers, builders, contractors, and construction superintendents.

The bill also makes technical and conforming changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

### **STATE BUILDING CODE AMENDMENTS**

Existing law allows the state building inspector and the Codes and Standards Committee to make amendments to the State Building Code as they deem necessary or desirable. Current law generally limits amendments to (1) administrative matters, (2) geotechnical and weather-related portions of the code, (3) compliance with general statutes provisions, and (4) any other matter which, based on substantial evidence, necessitates an amendment. The bill eliminates those conditions and instead limits amendments to those needed (1) by a state or federal law, (2) to protect public health and safety, or (3) to maintain eligibility for federal funding.

Whenever the nationally recognized model building code that the State Building Code is based on is revised, current law requires the state building inspector and the Codes and Standards Committee to update the state's code within 18 months after the date of the revision's first publication. The bill creates an exception to this requirement by, instead, limiting the frequency of the revision of the State Building Code to no more than once every six years or once per two full model code cycles. Under the bill, a "model code cycle" is the recurring period, typically three years, during which an edition of the nationally recognized model building code is published.

The bill requires the state building inspector and Codes and Standards Committee to publish a projected schedule for each proposed

State Building Code revision and its effective date at least 18 months before that date.

Additionally, from October 1, 2026, to October 1, 2032, the bill prohibits the state building inspector and Codes and Standards Committee from requiring, considering, approving, or adopting any new “building standard” (see above). However, during this period, the bill allows them to make any amendment they deem necessary to:

1. address an imminent threat to public health or life safety;
2. maintain eligibility for, or avoid the loss of, federal funding, including, disaster recovery funds;
3. comply with federal law or regulation;
4. make (a) editorial, formatting, or non-substantive revisions solely for clarity or internal consistency or (b) technical corrections that do not increase the cost of construction or expand the scope of activity regulated by the State Building Code; or
5. incorporate minimum federal accessibility requirements.

Under the bill, these amendments must (1) be narrowly tailored to the minimum necessary scope, (2) include written findings and a statement of necessity made by the state building inspector and included in the code-making record, and (3) terminate automatically within 24 months after the effective date of the amendment unless it is extended on one of the bases above.

### **COMMITTEE ACTION**

Public Safety and Security Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 29 Nay 0 (03/17/2026)