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AB-6 Residential developments: building standards: review. (2025-2026)

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AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MAY 05, 2025

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CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE— 2025–2026 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

NO. 6

Introduced by Assembly Member Ward

December 02, 2024

An act to add Sections 17921.12 and 17921.13 to the Health and Safety Code, relating to housing.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 6, as amended, Ward. Residential developments: building standards: review.

Existing law, the California Building Standards Law, establishes the California Building Standards Commission (commission) within the Department of General Services and sets forth its powers and duties, including approval and adoption of building standards and codification of those standards into the California Building Standards Code (code). Existing law requires the commission to publish, or cause to be published, editions of the code in its entirety once every 3 years.

Existing law requires the building standards and rules and regulations to impose substantially the same requirements as are contained in the most recent editions of specified international or uniform industry codes, including the International Residential Code of the International Code Council.

Existing law establishes the Department of Housing and Community Development (department) in the Business, Consumer Services, and Housing Agency and requires the department to submit an annual report to the Governor and both houses of the Legislature on the operations and accomplishments during the previous fiscal year of the housing programs administered by the department.

This bill would require the department to convene a working group no later than December 31, 2026, to research and consider identifying and recommending amendments to state building standards allowing residential developments to be ~~built~~, *built under the requirements of the California Residential Code*, as specified. The bill would require the department, no later than December 31, ~~2027~~, *2028*, to provide a one-time report of its findings to the Legislature in the annual report described above. The bill, if the report identifies and recommends amendments to building standards, would require the department to research, develop, and consider proposing the standards for adoption by the commission, as specified. For the purposes of these provisions, the bill would authorize the department to exceed the scope and application of the International Residential Code to allow residential

developments of between 3 and 10 units to be designed and constructed under the requirements of the California Residential Code.

The bill would additionally require the department to perform a review of construction cost pressures for single-family and multifamily residential construction as a results of new or existing building standards and provide its findings to the Legislature in its above-described annual report on or before December 31, 2026. The bill would require the department to perform the same review every 3 years to revise or update standards, as needed, to reduce construction costs, as specified.

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: yes Local Program: no

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. Section 17921.12 is added to the Health and Safety Code, to read:

17921.12. (a) No later than December 31, 2026, the Department of Housing and Community Development shall convene a working group, with membership including, but not limited to, the California Building Standards Commission, State Fire Marshal, Division of the State Architect, Energy Commission, and other stakeholders, to research and consider identifying and recommending amendments to state building standards allowing residential developments of between 3 and 10 units to be built under the requirements of the California Residential Code (Part 2.5 of Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations), and any necessary modifications to maintain health and safety standards for the developments. Each entity shall provide input relative to its area of expertise and oversight.

(b) No later than December 31, ~~2027~~, 2028, the department shall provide a one-time report of its findings to the Legislature in the annual report required by Section 50408.

(c) (1) If the working group identifies and recommends amendments to building standards in the report described in subdivision (b), the Department of Housing and Community Development and other state agencies within the working group with authority to propose adoption of building standards shall research, develop, and consider proposing for adoption by the California Building Standards Commission such standards for the next triennial update of the California Building Standards Code (Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations) that occurs on or after January 1, ~~2027~~, 2031.

(2) For the purposes of this subdivision, the Department of Housing and Community Development may exceed the scope and application of the International Residential Code as referenced in Section 17922 to allow residential developments of between 3 and 10 units to be designed and constructed under the requirements of the California Residential Code (Part 2.5 of Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations).

(d) (1) This section does not limit the application of the California Electrical Code (Part 3 of Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations), the California Mechanical Code (Part 4 of Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations), the California Plumbing Code (Part 5 of Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations), and the California Energy Code (Part 6 of Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations) to residential occupancies of any size.

(2) This section does not authorize the working group to propose the expansion of the California Residential Code to include chapters in the International Residential Code that were not adopted in the 2025 edition of the California Residential Code due to duplication with other parts of the California Building Standards Code.

SEC. 2. Section 17921.13 is added to the Health and Safety Code, to read:

17921.13. (a) No later than December 31, 2026, the Department of Housing and Community Development shall perform a review of construction cost pressures for single-family and multifamily residential construction as a result of new or existing building standards requirements in the California Buildings Standards Code and provide a one-time report of its findings to the Legislature in the annual report required by Section 50408.

(b) Commencing with the next triennial update of the California Building Standards Code (Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations) that occurs on or after January 1, ~~2027~~, 2031, and every three years thereafter, the Department of Housing and Community Development shall perform a review as described in subdivision (a) to revise or update standards, as needed, with a goal of reducing by 30 percent the cost of construction for new residential development.