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H.793

Introduced by Representatives Campbell of St. Johnsbury, Anthony of Barre
City, Austin of Colchester, Berbeco of Winooski, Bluemle of
Burlington, Bos-Lun of Westminster, Burke of Brattleboro,
Chesnut-Tangerman of Middletown Springs, Dodge of Essex,
Farlice-Rubio of Barnet, Goldman of Rockingham, Headrick of
Burlington, Hooper of Burlington, Jerome of Brandon, Krasnow
of South Burlington, LaBounty of Lyndon, Logan of
Burlington, Masland of Thetford, Morris of Springfield,
Mulvaney-Stanak of Burlington, Ode of Burlington, Patt of
Worcester, Rachelson of Burlington, Small of Winooski,
Stebbins of Burlington, Taylor of Colchester, and Torre of
Moretown

Referred to Committee on

Date:

Subject: Public safety; residential building code; study

Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to create a study
committee to examine and recommend strategies and methods for Vermont to
adopt a statewide residential building code.

An act relating to studying the adoption of a residential building code

1 It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

2 Sec. 1. FINDINGS AND INTENT

3 (a) The General Assembly finds:

4 (1) Vermont currently does not have an adopted statewide residential
5 building code, leaving a critical gap in standardized regulations for the
6 residential construction industry, particularly the construction of owner-
7 occupied single-family homes.

8 (2) The absence of a residential building code:

9 (A) results in a lack of uniformity in construction standards across
10 the State;

11 (B) means that consumers experiencing defects in the construction of
12 their homes have no ability to reference legally required building standards
13 when seeking a remedy; and

14 (C) gives insurers and lenders no legally established building
15 standards upon which to base their obligations.

16 (3) The International Residential Code (IRC) is a comprehensive set of
17 building regulations developed by the International Code Council to establish
18 minimum standards for the construction of residential buildings. The IRC
19 provides a standardized framework for the design, construction, and
20 maintenance of one- and two-family dwellings, as well as certain townhouses.

1 (4) The IRC includes specifications for building materials; structural
2 design; fire safety; electrical, mechanical, and plumbing systems; energy
3 efficiency; heating, cooling, and ventilation; and general safety. The IRC aims
4 to ensure the health and safety of occupants while promoting the durability and
5 sustainability of the residential structure.

6 (b) It is the intent of the General Assembly to create the Residential
7 Building Code Study Committee to examine and propose a strategy for
8 adopting and implementing the IRC in Vermont.

9 Sec. 2. RESIDENTIAL BUILDING CODE; STUDY COMMITTEE;

10 REPORT

11 (a) Creation. There is created the Residential Building Code Study
12 Committee to examine and recommend strategies and methods for the adoption
13 of the International Residential Code (IRC) as a statewide residential building
14 code.

15 (b) Membership. The Committee shall be composed of the following
16 16 members:

17 (1) one current member of the House of Representatives, appointed by
18 the Speaker of the House;

19 (2) one current member of the Senate, appointed by the Committee on
20 Committees;

21 (3) the Director of the Division of Fire Safety or designee;

1 (4) the Director of the Office of Professional Regulation or designee;

2 (5) the Director of the Office of Emergency Management or designee;

3 (6) the Commissioner of Public Service or designee;

4 (7) an individual, appointed by the American Institute of Architects,

5 Vermont chapter;

6 (8) an individual, appointed by the Associated General Contractors of

7 Vermont;

8 (9) an individual, appointed by the Vermont Builders and Remodelers

9 Association;

10 (10) an individual, appointed by the ICC Building Safety Association of

11 Vermont;

12 (11) an individual, appointed by the Vermont League of Cities and

13 Towns;

14 (12) an individual, appointed by the Vermont Association of Planning

15 and Development Agencies;

16 (13) an individual, appointed by the Vermont Housing Finance Agency;

17 (14) an individual, appointed by the Vermont Housing and Conservation

18 Board;

19 (15) an individual, appointed by the Housing & Homelessness Alliance

20 of Vermont; and

1 (16) an individual, appointed by the American Property and Casualty
2 Insurance Association.

3 (c) Powers and duties. The Committee shall examine the potential
4 adoption of a comprehensive residential building code, such as the IRC. In
5 particular, the Committee shall:

6 (1) assess how a comprehensive residential building code, such as the
7 IRC, would impact the State and could:

8 (A) address potential hazards in residential buildings and ensure the
9 well-being of residents;

10 (B) add structure to and potentially simplify compliance procedures
11 for builders and regulatory authorities;

12 (C) address risk reduction and disaster resilience to ensure that
13 residential structures are better equipped to withstand natural disasters and
14 changing environmental conditions;

15 (D) promote sustainable construction practices by aligning with the
16 State's energy efficiency and broader environmental goals; and

17 (E) impact housing affordability and home construction; and

18 (2) consider and recommend strategies to adopt the IRC, including the
19 potential designation of the Division of Fire Safety as the statewide authority
20 having jurisdiction for the administration, interpretation, and enforcement of

1 the code in conjunction with the Division's existing jurisdiction over other
2 building and fire safety codes.

3 (d) Assistance.

4 (1) For purposes of scheduling meetings and witnesses, the Committee
5 shall have the administrative assistance of the Office of Legislative Operations.

6 (2) For purposes of legal research and the preparation of recommended
7 legislation, the Committee shall have the assistance of the Office of Legislative
8 Counsel.

9 (3) The Committee shall have the technical assistance of the Division of
10 Fire Safety.

11 (e) Report. On or before December 15, 2024, the Committee shall submit a
12 written report to the General Assembly with its findings and any
13 recommendations for legislative action.

14 (f) Meetings.

15 (1) The Director of Fire Safety shall call the first meeting of the
16 Committee to occur on or before July 15, 2024.

17 (2) The Committee shall select a chair from among its members at the
18 first meeting.

19 (3) A majority of the membership shall constitute a quorum.

20 (4) The Committee shall cease to exist on January 1, 2025.

21 (g) Compensation and reimbursement.

1 (1) For attendance at meetings during adjournment of the General
2 Assembly, a legislative member of the Committee shall be entitled to per diem
3 compensation and reimbursement of expenses pursuant to 2 V.S.A. § 23 for
4 not more than six meetings.

5 (2) Other members of the Committee who are not otherwise
6 compensated by their employer for attendance at meetings shall be entitled to
7 per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses as permitted under
8 32 V.S.A. § 1010 for not more than six meetings.

9 (3) Payments to members of the Committee authorized under this
10 subsection shall be made from monies appropriated by the General Assembly
11 and from any grant funding received by the Committee.

12 Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

13 This act shall take effect on passage.