

HB 2415 -1 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Business and Labor

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Meeting Dates: 3/17, 3/31

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Requires municipalities that administer and enforce building inspection programs to use Department of Consumer and Business Services' (DCBS) electronic system for access to building codes information or to use system that is equivalent to or compatible with DCBS' system. Expands features required in Department's system to include electronic payment for permit applications; electronic receipt of plan approvals and permits; and performance of electronic field inspections, construction progress inspections, and on-site verification of compliance with building code requirements.

Requires DCBS to conduct study evaluating feasibility of and develop standards and specifications for system that allows performing electronic field inspections and construction progress inspections and to verify compliance with building code requirements on site.

Becomes operative January 1, 2025. Takes effect 91st day following adjournment sine die.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- History of electronic permit system and long lead time for local government to adopt DCBS' system or develop own equivalent system
- Application to all permits, not only plumbing and electrical permits
- Convenience of e-permit system to permit applicants

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-1 Directs DCBS to adopt rules establishing minimum standards and statewide consistency in electronic processes for reviewing plans, issuing permits, and performing field inspections. Requires municipality to meet these minimum standards regardless of whether the municipality uses DCBS' system or an equivalent system. Deletes requirement that DCBS conduct study.

BACKGROUND:

In 2003, the Building Codes Division of the Department of Consumer and Business Services worked with local governments and contractors to implement a pilot project for an electronic building permit system referred to as e-permitting. The system allows contractors to apply, pay and receive building permit approvals online and around the clock. Legislation was passed in 2005 and 2007 that transitioned the program from pilot to a regional, then statewide, service to contractors and local governments with a sunset date in 2018. In 2015, the Legislative Assembly removed the sunset, reduced the surcharge that supports the e-permitting system. The surcharge is equal to four percent of the permit fee and is paid by all contractors regardless of whether the jurisdiction participates in the e-permitting system. Use of the system by cities and counties is voluntary and the Department is prohibited from taking any adverse action against an entity that chooses not to use the system.