
OREGON PLUMBING-HEATING-COOLING CONTRACTORS OPPOSE SENATE BILL 1518

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By: Darrell W. Fuller / darrell@orphcc.com / 971-388-1786



Chair Lieber and Members of the Committee:

The Oregon State Association of Plumbing-Heating-Cooling Contractors represents the business owners of local, mainstreet contractors in communities large and small across the state of Oregon. Our members run the gamut, include new installation, remodels, and emergency services and repairs. Our members work on residential, office, commercial and public buildings. And our companies offer generous family-wage jobs with generous benefits and on-the-clock training through apprenticeship programs.

Is this a short session issue?

We do not believe an issue of this magnitude should be addressed during a short session.

50 years of success

Oregon is the envy of other states because we have had a successful state-wide mandatory code for 50 years next year. This consistency in the marketplace is extraordinary important. Moving from a state-wide code to one in which local jurisdictions can mandate a different code than the state-wide code would be a significant move backwards.

Do we need affordable housing?

Allowing densely populated local jurisdictions to adopt mandatory codes which everyone acknowledges are more expensive than the standard codes flies in the face of rhetoric focusing state attention on more affordable housing. If the state wants more affordable housing, then its leaders need to make decisions reducing the cost of developing housing, not increasing it.

Make the optional Reach Code more affordable

The Reach Code was designed as an optional code for property owners and developers. It should remain optional. If the Legislature wants more property owners and developers to use the optional Reach Code, then make it more affordable. The state can provide tax credits and/or grants to those using the Reach Code to make it as affordable, or more affordable, than using the base code. This strategy would have widespread support and would be a win-win for all stakeholders.

Conclusion

We welcome an opportunity to sit as part of a workgroup including DOE, BCD, environmental advocates, contractors, and any other stakeholders to discuss the far-ranging implications of this legislation. But we cannot support it as long as the purpose is to remove the optional aspect of the Reach Code.

Thank you.