



The Lone Star Chapter of Sierra Club Supports CSHB 738 (Paul): Updating our base residential and commercial building codes to 2012 standards will save energy, water and be resilient to climate extremes

CSHB 738 (Rep Dennis Paul) would finally raise the base statewide residential code to the 2012 Residential Building Code, adopted by the International Code Council several years ago. Our understanding is that the committee sub will also include commercial 2012 standards for multi-family and other commercial buildings. Current statutes still refer back to old 2001 and 2006 Residential codes that are outdated. In addition, in 2015, HB 1736 raised our state energy building code to the 2015 Energy Code, so it makes no sense to require a modern energy code and an outdated residential building code. In addition, the bill would continue to allow local amendments and require that any amendments require both a public hearing and an approved city ordinance to be effective. This is a good government requirement.

While the SIERRA CLUB would prefer that we raise the codes to the 2015 IRC and 2015 IBC to align with the energy code, we believe this is still a first good step.

Thus, CSHB 738 continues to allow local municipalities to set their own standards, but establishes a base. While the great majority of cities are already on the 2012 or 2015 residential building code, the bill will help raise basic standards for many smaller cities. Given the recent experience of uri, wildfires, floods and hurricanes, in which buildings constructed to more modern standards significantly outperformed older homes, giving all city dwellers these protections makes sense. In addition, the 2012 and 2015 Residential Building Codes include more protective windstorm protections that will help guard against future hurricanes along the coast, and better insulation to protect Texas homeowners against the cold.

Raising our state's minimum building code was also a key recommendation of the GLO and "Sharp" reports following Hurricane Harvey.

For More Information:

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