



### AIA SUPPORTS EFFECTIVE BUILDING CODES

#### Oppose weakening of the code development cycle

(SB 5185, Sponsor: Senator Benton)

Washington State adopts national model codes as the basis for its building and related codes. All of the national code development organizations utilize a 3-year cycle for updating their codes. SB 5185 proposes to take Washington off of the current 3-year update cycle and put our state on a 6-year cycle. Putting Washington out of sync with the national standards would weaken our codes and expose our architects, engineers, designers and contractors to new liability.

For instance, Washington enjoys safe harbor from accessibility-related lawsuits from the American with Disabilities Act and the National Fair Housing Standards, provided we use the latest model codes. Extending the code development cycle would put Washington out of sync with the federal standards and, thus, remove our safe harbor.

Extending the code cycle to 6 years would mean more expensive leaps in standards instead of modest adjustments every 3 years. Certification and training programs are developed nationally and would not be applicable in Washington, increasing training costs.

Washington State architects are national leaders in the profession, performing work across the country and otherwise contributing to the continuing advancement of architectural design practice. Since nearly all US states employ the same model codes, a code update cycle that lags national updates would not only put Washington firms at a competitive disadvantage, it would increase costs to comply with the outdated codes and standards for projects in our own state.

#### KEY POINTS

- *SB 5185 would increase code compliance costs and expose WA to new liability.*
- *WA needs to adhere to the national model code cycle of 3 years.*
- *A 3-year code cycles allows for greater code flexibility to adjust to needed public safety standards.*
- *Architects work in multiple states and rely upon consistent base codes to be effective.*