



June 10, 2020

Chair Diane Glenn & SBCC Council Members  
State Building Code Council

Re: 2018 code implementation

Dear Chair Glenn & Council Members:

**The American Institute of  
Architects**

**AIA Washington Council**  
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Seattle, WA 98104

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As you know, Governor Inslee's Proclamation 20-40 moved implementation of the updated 2018 building codes from July 1, 2020 to November 1, 2020. This was done to give the state and impacted industries time to reschedule cancelled training sessions and adjust to a virtual environment for new training events and related activities. AIA, for example, has held virtual training sessions on the new codes and plans to continue to do so through the summer and fall. Last month, Governor Inslee issued a letter to state legislators rejecting calls to delay the 2018 code further, and we strongly agree with his assessment.

We ask that you allow the 2018 code update to take effect in November as scheduled. Doing so will provide certainty for architects and others in the AEC industry who are already working on projects designed to the new code. Each time a new code cycle is implemented, architects have found that the industry adjusts quickly, with the new requirements spurring development of products and techniques needed to meet the new code. These improvements are needed on a regular basis to protect the safety, health, and welfare of the public and to help Washington meet its climate targets.

The proponents of delay made similar requests to legislators during the 2020 legislative session – before COVID began to impact the industry – and they have engaged in similar advocacy with the governor's office, the Legislature, and the SBCC in recent years. While the AEC industry has clearly been impacted by COVID, we do not believe that implementing the 2018 codes this year will significantly impact economic recovery in our industry.

Additionally, architects believe progressive codes, particularly energy codes, are the single most important factor in reducing the greenhouse gas emissions that are causing climate change. Without new code cycles, the market stagnates with no reason to innovate, and the improvements that drive the development of more sustainable and healthier buildings are lost. The 2018 codes had already been delayed a year prior to their approval in 2019, and this year's delay shifted the industry again. Washington's energy codes are leading the nation in combating climate change precisely because they demand improvements on a regular schedule designed to meet the climate-related mandates set forth by the legislative and executive branches. We cannot afford to lose that momentum now.

Please retain the November 2020 implementation date as mandated by Governor Inslee.

Respectfully,

Stephen Black  
President

Tammie Sueirro  
Executive Director