



### KEY POINTS

- *This bill has broad support by architects, engineers, building designers, building officials and educators.*
- *Modern architecture now requires more education and training.*
- *Licensing standards need to be updated.*
- *Corporate registration is confusing and exempts some architecture businesses from having to register.*
- *Current exemption language can cause misinterpretation to the detriment of the public.*
- *Revenue would increase enough to cover the limited costs of rulemaking and normal program oversight.*

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## MODERNIZATION OF ARCHITECTURE LAWS

### ***PLEASE SUPPORT ESSB 5529/ HB 1634***

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#### **Background**

It has been 25 years since the architecture law has been updated. New technologies and modern practice methods, such as 3-D computer modeling, integrated practice, stricter building and accessibility codes and advanced sustainability requirements have significantly altered the practice of architecture.

ESSB 5529/ HB 1634, introduced by Senators Fred Jarrett and Curtis King, and Representative Scott White, modernizes the architecture law.

ESSB 5529 passed out of the Senate on a bipartisan vote of 42-2. The bill enjoys broad support by architects, engineers, building designers, building officials and educators. The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges has endorsed it.

#### **Updating Qualification Standards**

In the last two decades, buildings and technology have become more complex. ESSB 5529/ HB 1634 recognizes that modern architects now require more education and training. In the last 24 years, the national examination and internship requirements have been updated, but qualification requirements for those without an accredited degree have not. ESSB 5529/ HB 1634 updates the non-degree route to licensure and requires continuing professional development for all licensed architects.

#### **Streamlining Corporate Registration**

The current statutes on corporate registration are confusing to the public and architects and are difficult for the regulators to administer. The new standard simplifies the corporate registration requirements by ensuring that any business offering architecture services in Washington State registers with the board, identifies their architects and has an architect in charge of architectural decisions.

#### **Cleaning Up the Exemptions**

The current exemptions are confusing for the public, architects, contractors, engineers and regulators. ESSB 5529/ HB 1634 clarifies the meaning of confusing exemptions, eliminates duplicative exemptions and resolves conflicting language in the section. It clarifies current law without dramatically altering the implementation or meaning of the exemptions.

Cleaning Up the Exemptions Continued >

For instance, current law includes an exemption for up to 4,000 square feet “of construction.” The licensing board interprets this clause to apply to a project in which the building is 4,000 square feet or less. Some building officials and others, however, have incorrectly interpreted the provision to apply only to the project size and not the building. Others have tried to improperly apply this size limitation to residential and farm exemptions.

ESSB 5529/ HB 1634 clarifies that the exemption applies to the size of the entire building and that residential (up to 4 units) and farm projects are exempted regardless of size.

A new exemption is added to allow non-architects to design projects of up to 4,000 square feet in a building that is larger than 4,000 square feet if certain conditions are met (mainly that there are no life safety impacts on the building and projects are not aggregated to result in a larger project).

Current law also seems to indicate that the architecture licensing board has authority to regulate engineering. The new law gives a blanket exemption to licensed professional engineers acting under their own law and removes unnecessary references to engineers in other exemptions. Engineers are independently licensed and authorized to provide services under law. It is inappropriate for the architecture law to appear to regulate them.

### **Fiscal Impacts**

Architecture licensing fees are placed into a dedicated account within the Department of Licensing. ESSB 5529/ HB 1634 generates a net positive fiscal impact to this account. Additional revenue is generated by the corporate registration provisions. The bill requires that businesses that offer architecture services to the public and do not currently register with the board to register. There are some administrative expenses to conduct rulemaking, and implement some of the bill’s provisions. The revenue more than covers the bill’s expenses.

The DOL has stated that if the projected revenue is realized, fee rates would be reduced for all architects and architecture businesses.

**PLEASE SUPPORT ESSB 5529,  
TO MODERNIZE THE ARCHITECTURE  
LICENSING LAW!**