

LEGISLATIVE DIGEST

[Building, Housing Codes - Mandatory Seismic Retrofit Program - Wood-Frame Buildings]

Ordinance amending the Building Code to modify some of the evaluation and retrofit criteria for the Mandatory Earthquake Retrofit Program and add seismic members to the Board of Examiners; amending the Housing Code to require a Report of Residential Building Record (3R Report) to include information on whether a building is included in the program and whether the required upgrade has been completed; adopting environmental findings and findings of local conditions under the California Health and Safety Code; and directing the Clerk of the Board to forward the legislation to specified State agencies.

Existing Law

Chapter 34B of the Building Code establishes a Mandatory Earthquake Retrofit Program for the mandatory seismic strengthening of existing wood-frame buildings that are (1) three or more stories or two stories over a basement or underfloor area with any portion extending above grade, (2) contain five or more dwelling units, (3) were constructed prior to January 1, 1978, and (4) have not been seismically strengthened under the Building Code within 15 years prior to June 17, 2013. Section 3406B provides engineering criteria for evaluation and retrofit of buildings within the scope of Chapter 34B. Section 3404 is a State Building Code section dealing with alterations to existing buildings.

Section 105A of the Building Code establishes a Board of Examiners with ten members who are qualified by experience and training to hear appeals and make decisions on matters concerning building design and construction.

Section 351 of the Housing Code requires that prior to the sale or exchange of any residential building after the first sale or exchange, the owner or owner's authorized agent must obtain from the Department of Building Inspection a Report of Residential Building Record (3R Report). The 3R Report sets forth specific information from official City records.

Amendments to Current Law

Building Code Section 3406B is amended to make technical clarifications to some of the engineering criteria. A subsection is added to Section 3404 to require submittal documents for a mandatory seismic retrofit to include plans indicating locations and construction of existing, new, and modified building elements used to comply with Chapter 34.

Section 105A is amended to add three Seismic Improvement members: a tenant who is also a licensed or registered architect, civil or structural engineer; a property owner who is also a

licensed or registered architect, civil or structural engineer; and a registered structural engineer specializing in seismic improvement.

Housing Code Section 351 is amended to require information to be included concerning whether the building is in the Mandatory Earthquake Retrofit of Wood-Frame Building Program and, if so, if the required upgrade work has been completed.

Background Information

The proposed changes to the Building and Housing Codes do not alter the scope, intention, or operation of the mandatory earthquake retrofit program but rather provide technical clarifications, enhanced reporting, and a clear appeals process. In developing these amendments, City staff worked with the Structural Engineers Association of Northern California, the San Francisco Realtors Association, and San Francisco property owners.

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