

contractor of various state building, labor, and safety laws constitutes a cause for disciplinary action by the board.

- 6) Establishes uniform health and sanitation standards for retail food facilities. Local health agencies are primarily responsible for enforcing these standards. A person who violates any provision of the California Retail Food Code is guilty of a misdemeanor, except as otherwise provided.

This bill:

Related to licensed contractors and like-for-like permits:

- 1) Provides that a false statement made in a certification, as specified, constitutes grounds for disciplinary action by the Contractors State License Board.
- 2) Defines “licensed commercial contractor” to mean a contractor holding a valid and active license in good standing in the appropriate classification for the work performed, as specified.
- 3) Defines “like-for-like equipment installation” to mean the installation or replacement of commercial food service equipment that is substantially similar in size, function, and utility demand to existing approved equipment and does not do any of the following:
 - a) Change the use or occupancy classification of the building.
 - b) Alter structural or load-bearing elements.
 - c) Modify fire or life safety systems, except for direct connection to existing approved systems.
 - d) Increase approved utility capacity.
 - e) Require discretionary review.
- 4) Defines “qualified licensed contractor certifier” to mean a licensed commercial contractor who satisfies all the following:
 - a) Holds a valid license in good standing in the appropriate classification for the work performed.

- b) Has not less than five years of experience performing commercial food service equipment installation or commercial restaurant construction experience.
 - c) Maintains commercial general liability insurance in an amount not less than two million dollars (\$2,000,000) per occurrence.
 - d) Is not subject to any current suspension, probation, or enforcement action by the Contractors State License Board.
- 5) Requires a local building department, upon request of an applicant for a permit for a like-for-like equipment installation within a restaurant, to allow a qualified licensed contractor certifier to submit a certification of compliance with applicable codes.
- 6) Provides a certification submitted pursuant to this bill shall satisfy the inspection requirement for the qualifying installation and shall be at the applicant's expense and shall not exempt the project from permit requirements.
- 7) Provides a qualified licensed contractor certifier shall submit an affidavit, under penalty of perjury, attesting to both of the following:
- a) The equipment installation complies with all applicable building, electrical, mechanical, plumbing, fire, and health and safety codes in effect at the time of installation.
 - b) The work performed is limited to a like-for-like equipment installation.
- 8) Requires a local building department to approve or deny a complete permit application, consistent with 5), within 10 business days of receipt. If the local building department does not approve or deny the application within the specified timeframe, the permit shall be deemed approved, provided all required fees have been paid.
- 9) Provides a qualified licensed contractor certifier shall be liable for damages arising from negligent or false certification, as specified.
- 10) Provides a city, county, or city and county shall adopt reasonable administrative requirements to implement this chapter.

Related to building standards for business establishments:

- 11) Requires the CBSC, as a part of the next triennial update of the Building Standards Code that occurs on or after January 1, 2027, to adopt building standards that do all the following:
 - a) Authorizes a business establishment that is takeout only to operate without providing customer restrooms.
 - b) Authorizes a business establishment, regardless of whether the business establishment sells alcohol, with a maximum occupancy of 49 persons to provide restrooms without urinals.
 - c) Authorizes a business establishment to install up to 1,000 square feet of patio seating without providing additional restrooms.
 - d) Authorizes a business establishment that serves alcohol to satisfy a requirement to provide restrooms by exclusively providing restrooms for use by all genders.
 - e) Authorizes a business establishment with a maximum occupancy of 100 occupants to operate without drinking fountains.
 - f) Authorizes a business establishment to operate cooking equipment without installing a Type 1 hood, as described, over the cooking equipment, provided that the cooking equipment is operated for the purpose of baking and the equipment does not produce cooking odors, smoke, grease, or vapor.
 - g) Authorizes a business establishment to operate an under-the-counter dishwasher without installing a mechanical exhaust system over the dishwasher.

Related to health and safety requirements:

- 12) Defines “noncontinuous cooking,” also known as “par-cooking,” to mean the cooking of food in a food facility using a process in which the initial heating of the food is intentionally halted so that it may be cooled and held for complete cooking at a later time prior to sale or service. Clarifies it does not include cooking procedures that only involve temporarily interrupting or slowing an otherwise continuous cooking process.

- 13) Defines “warm water” as water that is supplied through a mixing valve or combination faucet at a temperature of at least 85°F but not greater than 108°F.
- 14) Prohibits a steam valve from being used at a handwashing sink.
- 15) Requires a self-closing, slow-closing, or metering faucet shall provide a flow of water for at least 15 seconds without the need to reactivate the faucet.
- 16) Requires raw animal foods that are cooked using a noncontinuous cooking process to be all of the following, as specified.
- 17) Changes “thermometer” to “temperature measuring device.”
- 18) Prescribes certain conditions for which a grease trap is not required in a certain location or with certain levels of accessibility.
- 19) Dictates size and placement requirements for passthrough window service openings, as specified.
- 20) Provides that certain requirements for temporary food facilities are not required, if flying insects, vermin, birds, other pests, and environmental factors, including, but not limited to, precipitation and wind that could contaminate the food, are absent due to the location of the facility or other limiting conditions.

Background

The Building Standards Process. The California Building Standards Law establishes the process for adopting state building standards by the CBSC. Statewide building standards are intended to provide uniformity in building across the state. The CBSC’s duties include the following: receiving proposed building standards from state agencies for consideration in each triennial and intervening building code adoption cycle; reviewing and approving building standards submitted by state agencies; adopting building standards for state buildings where no other state agency is authorized by law; and publishing the approved building standards in the California Building Standards Code.

Most building standards currently in use in California are developed and vetted at the national level every three years by technical organizations, academics, and trade associations that develop consensus standards, which are then incorporated into the International Building Code (IBC), the national model code used by most U.S. jurisdictions. At the state level, agencies with jurisdictional authority then review the IBC and amend as necessary for California’s specific needs, *e.g.,:*

- Office of State Fire Marshall is responsible for the development of building standards that provide for fire and life safety within residential buildings, such as means of egress, fire alarm systems, and fire extinguishing systems.
- Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) is responsible for the development of residential building standards, such as those in single-family and multifamily dwellings, as well as dormitories, hotels, motels, and accessibility in privately funded multifamily dwellings.
- Division of the State Architect is responsible for the development of building standards to promote structural safety and accessibility in public schools, essential service buildings, commercial facilities, and public housing.

After the proposal of building standards by state agencies, the proposals undergo a public vetting process. A code advisory committee composed of experts in a particular scope of code reviews the proposed standards, followed by public review. The proposing agency considers feedback and may then amend the standards and re-submit them to the CBSC for consideration. CBSC reviews and adopts the standards and files them with the Secretary of State for codification and publishing, and there is an 180-day period during which local agencies file modifications and changes to the state codes. The new codes then take effect January 1st of the subsequent year following publication.

Updates and changes to building standards are adopted on two timelines: through the triennial code adoption cycle which occurs every three years, and through the intervening code adoption cycle which provides an update to codes 18 months after the publication of the triennial codes. Regulatory activities for each cycle begin over two years before the effective date of the codes.

Comments

- 1) *Author's statement.* "California's neighborhood restaurants are the heart of our communities, yet so many are fighting just to survive. AB 1915 is a commitment to stand beside them, offering the support they need to launch, adapt, and thrive. When local restaurants succeed, our communities are stronger for it."
- 2) *Requiring vs. proposing building standards for adoption.* As a matter of practice, the Legislature typically offers guidelines or directs agencies to *consider* certain standards, rather than *requiring* the adoption of specific standards, in order to provide flexibility and allow for subject matter experts to

determine suitability and weigh the many considerations that must be evaluated when recommending new or modified building standards.

This bill would *require* the CBSC to adopt a variety of building standards for restaurants. While the proposed standards seem straightforward and reasonable to ease burdens on business owners without jeopardizing health and safety or harming patrons, it may be worth considering whether the bill instead instructs the CBSC to *consider* the proposed standards.

- 3) *Like-for-like permitting.* Another provision of the bill requires local building departments, upon request of an applicant for a permit for a like-for-like equipment installation within a restaurant, to allow a qualified licensed contractor certifier to submit a certification of compliance with applicable codes. This is intended to speed up the approval process for like-for-like permits, while ensuring safeguards are in place to ensure proper reviews are not forfeited. This could accomplish the author's intent of easing stressors on the commercial business industry, including restaurants.
- 4) *Seeing double.* This committee previously heard a substantially similar bill, AB 2550 (Gabriel, 2024). That bill contained similar provisions to ease building standards for certain restaurant establishments. This bill differs in that it also provides a like-for-like permitting process intended to speed up approval timelines for restaurants that apply for equipment installations. AB 2550 was held on suspense in the Senate Appropriations Committee.
- 5) *Opposition.* The Contractors State License Board (CSLB) wrote in opposition with concern over allowing contractors to self-certify their installation of restaurant equipment and bypass review from local building inspectors. They anticipate a much greater workload due to a potential influx of complaints related to negligent or false self-certifications.
- 6) *Triple-referral.* This bill will first be heard in the Senate Health Committee, which has jurisdiction over the bill's health and safety provisions in commercial establishments, on June 17th. Should this bill pass out of that committee, it will next be heard by this committee due to its inclusion of provisions related to local building departments, as well as considerations for the CBSC. Should this bill pass out of this committee, this bill will be heard in the Senate Business and Professions Committee, which has jurisdiction over the bill's provisions related to the Business & Professions Code, including licensure requirements.

Related/Prior Legislation

AB 2550 (Gabriel, 2024) — would have eased a set of building standards for restaurants that meet certain conditions, among other provisions not within this committee’s jurisdiction. *This bill was held on suspense in Senate Appropriations.*

FISCAL EFFECT: Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: Yes Local: Yes

POSITIONS: (Communicated to the committee before noon on Wednesday, June 17th, 2026.)

SUPPORT:

Bub and Grandma's
Cafe Tropical Group LLC
California Chamber of Commerce
California Restaurant Association
California Travel Association (CALTRAVEL)
Greater San Fernando Valley Chamber of Commerce
Los Angeles County Business Federation (BIZ-FED)
Old Growth Hospitality, LLC
The Chocolate Dispensary
The Lucques Group
Truly Pizza
Valley Industry and Commerce Association (VICA)
West Valley Warner Center Chamber of Commerce
Whole Cluster Hospitality
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OPPOSITION:

Contractors State License Board

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