
UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Bill No: SB 655
Author: Stern (D), et al.
Amended: 9/4/25 in Assembly
Vote: 21

SENATE HOUSING COMMITTEE: 10-0, 4/29/25

AYES: Wahab, Arreguín, Cabaldon, Caballero, Cortese, Durazo, Gonzalez,
Grayson, Ochoa Bogh, Padilla

NO VOTE RECORDED: Seyarto

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE: 6-0, 5/23/25

AYES: Caballero, Seyarto, Cabaldon, Grayson, Richardson, Wahab

NO VOTE RECORDED: Dahle

SENATE FLOOR: 39-0, 6/4/25

AYES: Allen, Alvarado-Gil, Archuleta, Arreguín, Ashby, Becker, Blakespear,
Cabaldon, Caballero, Cervantes, Choi, Cortese, Dahle, Durazo, Gonzalez,
Grayson, Grove, Hurtado, Jones, Laird, Limón, McGuire, McNerney, Menjivar,
Niello, Ochoa Bogh, Padilla, Pérez, Richardson, Rubio, Seyarto, Smallwood-
Cuevas, Stern, Strickland, Umberg, Valladares, Wahab, Weber Pierson, Wiener

NO VOTE RECORDED: Reyes

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 47-5, 9/9/25 – Roll call not available.

SUBJECT: Dwelling units: indoor temperature

SOURCE: Author

DIGEST: This bill declares it is the established policy of the state that all dwelling units be able to attain and maintain a safe maximum indoor temperature, as specified, and provides that this bill does not expand any obligation of the state to provide a safe maximum indoor temperature or require the expenditure of additional resources to develop infrastructure beyond the obligations that existing under existing program requirements.

Assembly Amendments of 9/4/25 require all relevant state agencies to consider the state policy for safe maximum indoor temperature within their policies and programs, as specified.

ANALYSIS:

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes the California Building Standards Commission (CBSC) within the Department of General Services, and requires the commission to approve and adopt building standards and to codify those standards in the California Building Standards Code. Requires CBSC to publish editions of the code in its entirety once every three years. In the intervening period, the CBSC must publish supplements as necessary.
- 2) Requires CBSC to receive proposed building standards from a state agency for consideration in an 18-month code adoption cycle. Requires CBSC to adopt regulations governing the procedures for 18-month code adoption cycle, which must include adequate provision of the following:
 - a) Public participation in the development of standards;
 - b) Notice in written form to the public of the compiled building standards with justifications;
 - c) Technical review of the proposed building standards and accompanying justification by advisory boards appointed by CBSC; and
 - d) Time for review of recommendations by the advisory boards prior to CBSC taking action.
- 3) Requires proposed building standards that are submitted to CBSC for consideration to be accompanied by an analysis completed by the appropriate state agency that justifies approval based on criteria, as specified.
- 4) Requires the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) to propose the adoption, amendment, or repeal of building standards to CBSC for residential buildings, including hotels, motels, lodging houses, apartment houses, dwellings, buildings, and structures.

This bill:

- 1) Declares the established policy of the state be that all dwelling units, defined as a structure or the part of a structure used as a home, residence, or sleeping place

by one person who maintains a household or by two or more persons who maintain a common household, be able to attain and maintain a safe maximum indoor temperature.

- 2) Requires every relevant state agency, including but not limited to, the California Environmental Protection Agency, HCD, Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation, Public Utilities Commission, State Energy Resources Conservation and Development Commission, State Air Resources Board, State Department of Health Care Services, State Department of Public Health (CDPH), and Strategic Growth Council, to consider the state policy described above as follows:
 - a) When revising, adopting, or establishing policies, programs, and criteria, including grant criteria, relevant to achieving this state policy.
 - b) Beginning January 1, 2027, when revising, adopting, or establishing regulations relevant to achieving this state policy.
- 3) Provides that this bill does not expand any obligation of the state to provide a safe maximum indoor temperature or require the expenditure of additional resources to develop infrastructure beyond the obligations that existing under existing program requirements.

Comments

Author statement. “As Californians face the growing impacts of climate change, extreme heat is among the most alarming and deadly. These spikes in heat are not just uncomfortable – they are life threatening. Vulnerable populations including our elderly, children, those with preexisting health conditions, and low income individuals where access to cooling resources may be limited, are disproportionately affected. SB 655 codifies a maximum safe indoor temperature that new California residences must be able to maintain. As the state explores resources to meet our climate goals, it must also build homes intentionally and strategically to refuge Californians from extreme heat.”

State action plan. In response to concerns about the dangerous impacts of extreme heat, the Governor’s Office released “Protecting Californians from Extreme Heat: A State Action Plan to Build Community Resilience” in April 2022.¹ This plan, known as the California Extreme Heat Action Plan (EHAP), includes 13 goals under the categories of building public awareness and notification; strengthening community services and response; increasing the resilience of our built

¹ [Protecting Californians From Extreme Heat: A State Action Plan to Build Community Resilience](#)

environment; and utilizing nature-based solutions. Areas of near-term focus include implementing a statewide public health monitoring system for early identification, monitoring, and tracking of heat illness events; accelerating readiness and protection of communities most impacted by extreme heat; protecting vulnerable populations through codes, standards, and regulations; expanding economic opportunity and building a climate smart workforce that can operate under, and address, extreme heat; increasing public awareness to reduce risks posed by extreme heat; and protecting natural and working lands, ecosystems, and biodiversity from the impacts of extreme heat.

Establishing building standards for protections against heat. Although California building standards have long specified that newly constructed residential dwelling units must be able to maintain a *minimum* indoor air temperature, there is no requirement for a *maximum* indoor air temperature. Recent legislation (AB 2597, Bloom, 2022) would have required HCD to develop, propose, and submit to the CBSC mandatory standards for adequate residential cooling for both new and existing units. AB 2597 was parked by the author in the Senate Housing Committee, due to concerns about placing onerous requirements on housing providers, circumventing the state regulatory process for building code adoption, and placing significant challenges on the electric grid capacity due to more air conditioners.

Stemming from that conversation, legislation enacted as part of the budget agreement that year (AB 209, Committee on Budget, 2022) included a provision requiring HCD to provide recommendations to the Legislature by January 1, 2025 to help ensure that residential dwelling units can maintain safe indoor temperature.

HCD report. As required by AB 209, HCD recently released “Policy Recommendations: Recommended Maximum Safe Indoor Temperature” to the Legislature.² The report notes that its policy recommendations are aligned with many of the goals identified in the 2022 EHAP discussed above. The report recommends that the state consider a general maximum safe indoor air temperature of 82 degrees Fahrenheit for residential dwelling unit, to be implemented by methods including building standards for newly constructed residential dwelling units, and/or incentive programs for retrofitting existing residential dwelling units, manufactured homes, and mobile homes. The report recommends the following:

- a) For newly constructed residential units:

² [Policy Recommendations: Recommended Maximum Safe Indoor Air Temperature \(ca.gov\)](#)

- i. Direct HCD to propose building standards that require newly constructed residential dwelling units to be designed and constructed to maintain a maximum indoor air temperature of 82 degrees Fahrenheit.
 - ii. Establish incentive programs for passive and low energy cooling strategies focusing on the use of cool roofs, cool walls, window shading, building shading, and landscaping. In developing these programs, evaluate the use of modeling predictions of future weather data rather than historical weather data.
- b) For existing residential units, mobile homes, and manufactured homes:
- i. Establish incentive programs to encourage broader adoption and use of fans or whole house ventilation systems.
 - ii. Establish incentive programs to encourage the use of room evaporative coolers [commonly known as “swamp coolers”] in warmer climate zones.
 - iii. Establish incentive programs to encourage the use of air conditioning, with current heat pump technology, where feasible and cost effective.
 - iv. Establish incentives for weatherization and passive and low energy cooling retrofit strategies.
- c) For newly constructed manufactured homes:
- i. Submit a petition to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Manufactured Housing Consensus Committee to consider applying the recommendations of this report to newly constructed manufactured homes.

State policy for maximum safe indoor temperature. This bill is modeled after similar existing declarations, such as the state’s declared policies that every human being has the right to safe, clean, affordable, and accessible water, and that every human being has the right to access sufficient affordable and healthy food. Also similar to existing declarations, this bill requires relevant state agencies to consider this policy moving forward when revising, adopting, or establishing policies, programs, criteria, and regulations relevant to achieving the policy. Unlike other bills, this one provides that this bill does not expand any obligation of the state to

provide a safe maximum indoor temperature or require the expenditure of additional resources to develop infrastructure beyond the obligations that existing under existing program requirements.

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

According to the Assembly Appropriations Committee:

- 1) HCD anticipates minor and absorbable General Fund (GF) costs.
- 2) CDPH indicates GF costs of \$180,000 in fiscal year 2026-27 and annually thereafter, for one position to integrate considerations and mechanisms to maintain a safe maximum indoor air temperature when revising, adopting, or establishing relevant policies, programs, regulations, and criteria.
- 3) GF costs of an unknown, but potentially significant amount to other specified state agencies to consider this state policy while revising or establishing policies, programs, criteria, and regulations that impact achieving a safe maximum indoor temperature.
- 4) Potential future GF cost pressures to achieve, through adopted building standards and incentive programs, a maximum safe indoor air temperature for newly constructed residential dwelling units, and eventually all residential dwellings.

SUPPORT: (Verified 9/9/25)

Building Decarbonization Coalition
Building Electrification Institute
California Center for Movement Legal Services
California Democratic Party
California Environmental Voters (formerly Clcv)
California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation
Center for Community Action & Environmental Justice
Center on Race, Poverty & the Environment
Central California Environmental Justice Network
Central Valley Air Quality Coalition
Cleaneearth4kids.org
Coalition for Economic Survival
Courage California
Greenfield Walking Group
Healing and Justice Center

Housing Now!
Inland Equity Community Land Trusts
Inner City Law Center
Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity
Leadership Counsel Action
Leadership Counsel for Justice & Accountability
Local Clean Air Energy Alliance
Madera Coalition for Community Justice
National Resources Defense Council
Regional Asthma Management and Prevention
Sierra Club
So Cal Trash Army
Starting Over INC.
Strategic Actions for a Just Economy
Tenants Together
Todec Legal Center
Usgbc California
Western Center on Law & Poverty

OPPOSITION: (Verified 9/9/25)

Southern California Rental Housing Association

ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT: A large coalition of environmental, tenants' rights, and anti-poverty organizations state, "Extreme heat is a huge and growing risk to Californians" and "As temperatures rise and heat waves become longer and more intense, deaths in California could rise to 11,300 a year by 2050, and much higher mortality when the increasing number of older persons is also considered."

ARGUMENTS IN OPPOSITION: The Southern California Rental Housing Association, writing on a prior version of the bill, states that "[t]his bill places unrealistic expectations on landlords and developers at a time when we are already grappling with historic inflation in construction costs, labor shortages, supply chain challenges, and mounting regulatory burdens."

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9/9/25 14:56:08

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