

**House Economic Development and Workforce Services Committee**  
January 31th, 2025

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**Bill: HB 175 – Housing Construction Amendments**

Sponsor: Representative Raymond P. Ward

Floor Sponsor: Undeclared

**UASD Position: Tracking**

This Bill modifies the state construction code related to housing.

Discussion: Representative Ward stated that the intent of this Bill is to explore ways to reduce housing costs. He noted that building code requirements contribute to housing expenses by ensuring certain living spaces meet safety standards. The sponsor explained that there are two sets of building codes, one for residential properties and one for commercial properties. Some buildings fall on the boundary between the two. Under current regulations, duplexes follow residential standards while fourplexes are classified under commercial standards. This requires fourplexes to have additional fire management measures, such as sprinkler systems. Installing sheetrock costs around \$1,000. Adding sprinklers to all four units costs approximately \$16,000. Representative Ward explained that this Bill would remove fourplexes from commercial classification within the state's construction code.

Representative Shallenberger asked whether the Bill primarily affects water sprinkler requirements. The sponsor confirmed that sprinklers were the primary impact of the Bill. Representative Shallenberger then inquired whether similar discrepancies exist in other parts of the building code. The sponsor stated that if any similar issues arise, he is willing to introduce legislation to address them. Representative Fiefla asked how the proposed changes would ensure safety standards remain intact. The sponsor responded that he relied on expert input to ensure the changes maintain safety, while improving affordability. Representative Fiefla then asked whether the Bill would impact insurance prices. The sponsor admitted he was unsure but was open to looking into the issue. Representative Fiefla expressed concern that while the change might help home builders lower costs, it could impose a financial burden on homeowners down the road in the form of higher insurance premiums. Representative Owens asked whether the Bill applied only to single-story buildings or if it extended to two-story structures. The sponsor clarified that it applies to buildings with no more than two stories. House Amendment 1, which was adopted by the Committee, states that a fourplex may only be one or two stories in order to qualify under the residential standards.

The Utah League of Cities and Towns spoke in support of the amendment. Representative Ward emphasized that if any safety concerns arise, he is willing to make further changes. The Utah State Fire Chiefs Association also spoke in support of the amendment and would not support the Bill without this change. The Utah Home Builders Association (“HBA”) spoke in favor of the Bill and expressed interest in additional incremental changes to improve housing affordability..

Yeas: 8

Nays: 0

N/V: 2

**Outcome: HB 175, as amended, passed out of the Committee with a favorable recommendation.**

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**Bill: HB 313 – State Construction and Electrical Standards Amendments**

Sponsor: Representative Thomas W. Peterson

Floor Sponsor:

**UASD Position: Tracking**

This Bill modifies the State Construction Code.

**Outcome: HB 313 was not heard in the Committee on January 31, 2025.**

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