



2025-2026 General Assembly

# HOUSE BILL 251: Various Disaster Recovery Reforms, Sec. 6: Authorize a Temporary Exemption from Certain State Building Code Requirements Pertaining to Fire-Resistant Windows for Downtown, Commercial Structures Damaged by Hurricane Helene

**Analysis of:** S.L. 2025-18, Sec. 6

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**Prepared by:** Legislative Analysis  
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Section 6 of S.L. 2025-18 (House Bill 251) allows eligible buildings to be temporarily exempt from compliance with current fire-resistant window requirements under the North Carolina State Building Code (Code). An eligible building is one that meets all of the following criteria:

- Is located in a Helene-affected county, was in existence prior to September 27, 2024, and was directly damaged or destroyed by Hurricane Helene.
- Is located within the central business district or downtown commercial district of a city as of September 27, 2024.
- Is solely classified as a commercial occupancy under the Code and not classified under any residential or mixed-use occupancy group.
- Is undergoing reconstruction, rebuilding, rehabilitation, or repair solely for the purpose of restoring the building to substantially its previous condition, use, occupancy, and size, without expanding its original footprint, height, or changing its occupancy classification under the Code.

Owners of eligible buildings may reconstruct or repair the eligible building using window assemblies that have the same fire-protection rating that existed in the eligible building as of September 27, 2024. Eligible buildings are not required to upgrade to the current fire-protection ratings required by the Code. To utilize the exemption, the owner of an eligible building must submit an affidavit to the local building inspections department with the permit application. The exemption must be claimed within two years after the effective date of this section and does not relieve owners of eligible buildings from complying with other fire safety requirements.

This section became effective June 26, 2025, and applies to eligible buildings for which a Certificate of Occupancy is issued on or after that date.

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