



SENATE BILL 602: H'cane Helene Bldg Code Window Exemption.

2025-2026 General Assembly

Committee:	Senate Rules and Operations of the Senate	Date:	April 30, 2025
Introduced by:	Sen. Hise	Prepared by:	William Brewer
Analysis of:	Second Edition		Staff Attorney

OVERVIEW: *Senate Bill 602 would temporarily exempt certain eligible commercial buildings located within a Helene-affected county from having to comply with upgraded State Building Code requirements related to fire-resistant windows.*

BILL ANALYSIS:

Senate Bill 602 would allow 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 defined by G.S. 160A-1, 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 would be allowed to 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 would not be required to upgrade to the current fire-protection ratings required by the Code.

To utilize the exemption, the owner of an eligible building would be required to submit an affidavit to the local building inspections department with the permit application. The exemption would have to be claimed within two years after the effective date of this act, and would not relieve owners of eligible buildings from complying with other fire safety requirements.

EFFECTIVE DATE: This act would be effective when it becomes law and would apply to eligible buildings for which a Certificate of Occupancy is issued on or after that date.

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Legislative Analysis
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