

HOUSE BILL [25-1273](#) : Official City Position

Approved by Westminster City Council on April 17, 2025

REPRESENTATIVES Boesenecker, Woodrow; SENATORS Ball, Hinrichsen:
Concerning requiring certain municipalities to modify building codes to allow five stories of a multifamily residential building to be served by a single exit.

Official City Position: OPPOSE

Status: **Active** – This bill was introduced in the House on February 19, 2025, assigned to the Transportation, Housing & Local Government Committee. The bill has passed the House and was introduced in the Senate on April 7, 2025.

Description:

The bill requires municipalities to adopt or amend their building codes to allow multifamily residential buildings up to five stories to be served by a single exit, if certain conditions are met.

City Comments: This legislation is in support to the following principles as set forth in the City's [2025 Legislative Policy Statement](#):

HOME RULE AND LOCAL CONTROL

- The City of Westminster believes strongly in the principles of home rule authority and local control.

PUBLIC SAFETY

- Supports legislation that increases the safety of first responders, including funding for mental health services.
- The City of Westminster works diligently towards keeping citizens safe anywhere in the City.
- Supports legislation to require the installation of appropriate fire protection systems in structures to enhance life safety and property protection.

In an effort to encourage affordable housing, the legislature is working on this legislation. The City is concerned that it would also greatly impact public safety. This bill poses significant safety concerns for both building occupants and first responders. While affordability is an important goal, it must be balanced with basic life safety. Current building and fire codes establish minimum exit requirements based on critical factors such as occupancy type, number of occupants, and distance to exits. These codes only allow flexibility when enhanced fire protection systems—like alarms and sprinklers—are installed. They are not arbitrary regulations; they represent the minimum standards necessary to ensure people can safely exit a building during an emergency.

Reducing the number of required stairwells, especially in multi-story buildings, creates dangerous conditions. A single stairwell in a five-story building leads to significant congestion, which slows evacuation and makes it harder for occupants to escape. At the same time, it severely limits how quickly and effectively firefighters can bring equipment

and personnel to the source of a fire. Fire departments depend on having two stairwells—one for evacuating occupants and one for conducting firefighting operations. Treating stairs as only an exit mechanism fails to recognize this critical dual purpose. The result would be reduced operational efficiency for fire crews and increased risk for everyone in the building.

Even with modern life safety systems like sprinklers and alarms, stair access remains essential. While sprinklers are effective at suppressing fires, they do not eliminate the production of toxic smoke and gases. Survivability in these situations depends on being able to quickly and safely exit the building. Limiting exits undermines that ability, even in buildings equipped with the latest fire protection technology.

Finally, this bill erodes local control by restricting the ability of home rule jurisdictions to adopt more stringent safety requirements. Cities and counties often enhance baseline safety standards to reflect local conditions, building types, and fire department capabilities. This legislation would prevent that flexibility. Any changes to life safety infrastructure—particularly something as fundamental as exiting a building—should be developed through the national model code process, not through state legislation. That process is research-based, tested, and inclusive of the perspectives of fire service professionals, building officials, engineers, and safety experts. Skipping that process increases the likelihood of unintended and potentially dangerous consequences.