



Text File

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Committee: City Council

Status: Adopted

WHEREAS, More than 280,000 occupied units in the Commonwealth have moderate to severe physical inadequacies, such as leaky roofs or windows, exposed wiring, unreliable heat, and plumbing issues; and

WHEREAS, the inadequate funding available to address emergency, basic systems, and habitability repairs prevents service providers from preserving thousands of homes each year because deferred maintenance issues must be resolved before applicants can receive weatherization, energy efficiency, and adaptive modification services; and

WHEREAS, severe health and safety issues including exposure to mold and lead, inability to keep warm in the winter and cool in the summer, and high utility bills can arise due to deferred home repair and maintenance; and

WHEREAS, Homeowners, landlords, service providers, and administrators struggle to navigate the different eligibility requirements across programs supported through existing home repair infrastructure because many counties lack the capacity to coordinate intake, sequence available programs, and provide comprehensive home repairs; and

WHEREAS, The success of local home repair interventions hinges upon the availability of skilled workers employed by licensed and insured businesses, but there are not enough skilled home repair professionals to meet the increased demand; and

WHEREAS, The climate crisis has caused temperatures in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to increase by 1.8F in the last century, and a 10% increase in precipitation, creating more potential problems for homeowners with deferred maintenance issues; and

WHEREAS, Housing affordability and the climate crisis are both equity issues, with communities of color and low-income communities more at-risk for severe impacts; and

WHEREAS, The Whole-Home Repairs Act would cover funding gaps for local governments and non-profits in order to address emergency, basic systems, and habitability repairs, provide technical assistance and case management services, coordinate intake, achieve comprehensive home repairs by sequencing programs, and provide job seekers with the wrap-around services needed to complete workforce development programs; and

WHEREAS, Several other states, including Delaware, Indiana, and Minnesota, have successfully implemented similar "Pre-Weatherization" programs; and

WHEREAS, Adopting the Whole-Home Repairs Act will crucially assist with coordination among existing

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Weatherization and Pre-Weatherization programs and take significant steps toward addressing home repairs holistically, improving community health, and protecting the Commonwealth's most vulnerable; and

WHEREAS, Single-family homes make up 74% of the total housing units in Pittsburgh; and

WHEREAS, over half of the homes in Pittsburgh were built before 1940; and

WHEREAS, Pittsburgh's aging housing stock poses special risks to seniors and people with disabilities, who are more at risk of injury, may have accessibility needs, and are often unable to afford unexpected repair costs; and

WHEREAS, Pittsburgh's aging housing stock is also harmful to children, who are exposed to conditions that can trigger asthma or cause lead poisoning resulting in cognitive impairment; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic with its economic impact caused historic levels of unemployment in Pittsburgh, significant losses of household income, and unprecedented increases in the cost of lumber and other construction materials, rendering it even more difficult for homeowners and small landlords to afford the cost of repairs; and

WHEREAS, hundreds of area homeowners are on waiting lists for home repair programs or are turned away every year for lack of funds

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Council of the City of Pittsburgh does hereby urge the Pennsylvania General Assembly to adopt the Whole Home Repairs Act (Senate Bill 1135).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this Will of Council shall be sent to the Allegheny County Delegation of the Pennsylvania General Assembly and Governor Tom Wolf.