

HB 937

Prohibit Local Government Design Standards

Building Design Standards (HB 937)

Talking Points When Discussing HB 937 With Legislators

This legislation would prohibit cities and counties from limiting or prohibiting, either directly or indirectly, any state code-approved building material, product or construction practice for single-family homes. Local residential building design standards for aesthetic purposes would also be prohibited, since they only allow local building code amendments in current law to be based solely on local climatic, geologic, topographic, or public safety factors.

- Local governments are the proper level of government to determine if residential building design standards are needed and to what extent. These decisions relate to future planning and development and local governments have been given authority over development planning, zoning, building permits and inspections and the infrastructure and services necessary to support development like roads and streets, water and sewer, public safety, code enforcement and others.
- **What are design standards?** Examples include, type or style of exterior material; style or materials of roof structures or porches; look, location and number of windows and doors; number, layout and type of rooms; type of foundation structures; landscaping requirements; and variation of design within a neighborhood among homes.
- **Why are they important?** Design standards can give a community an identity through a uniform look and feel, for example, Helen Georgia. They can also be used to limit shoddy or cookie cutter neighborhoods. They can attract economic development and create a place that people want to move.
- **How does design standards relate to “affordable housing?”** Design standards do not necessarily increase the cost of housing but may help protect the long-term value of the property for what may be the homeowner’s biggest investment.
- **Who is pushing this bill and why?** The Home Builders Association, Association of Realtors, Council of Quality Growth, Vinyl Siding Institute and the Georgia Chamber of Commerce. These organizations are advocating for these changes to generate higher profits for their member businesses. The general public has not raised design standards as an issue they want addressed.

- **If this bill passes, what will the industry ask for next?** It is likely there will be efforts in the future to expand the preemption on local design standards to commercial development, multi-family housing and manufactured homes.