

**PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY COUNCIL  
AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY**

---

**Meeting Date:** 5/9/2000**Reference No.:** CB-30-2000**Proposer:** Gourdine, Hendershot, Maloney, Shapiro,  
Wilson**Draft No.:** 1**Sponsors:** Gourdine, Hendershot, Maloney, Shapiro, Wilson**Item Title:** An Act amending the provisions of the Building Code  
relating to temporary safeguards and emergency  
measures

---

**Drafter:** Ralph E. Grutzmacher  
Legislative Officer**Resource** Sandra Eubanks, Director  
**Personnel:** THE Committee

---

**LEGISLATIVE HISTORY:****Date Presented:** 4/11/2000**Executive Action:** 6/20/2000 S**Committee Referral:** 4/11/2000 THE**Effective Date:** 8/7/2000**Committee Action:** 5/1/2000 FAV**Date Introduced:** 5/9/2000**Public Hearing:** 6/6/2000 1:30 P.M.**Council Action:** 6/6/2000 ENACTED**Council Votes:** DB:A, JE:-, IG:A, TH:A, WM:A, RVR:A, AS:A, PS:-, MW:A**Pass/Fail:** P**Remarks:** \_\_\_\_\_

---

**TRANSPORTATION, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE** DATE: 5/1/00

Committee Vote: Favorable, 5-0 (In favor: Council Members Shapiro, Gourdine, Hendershot, Maloney and Wilson).

The Committee held several worksessions on unoccupied buildings prior to the referral of CB-30-2000 to the committee. The purpose of the worksessions was to discuss unoccupied buildings and the current policy/legislation, in an effort to collectively develop strategies to modify/revise existing legislation to further alleviate some of the issues associated with unoccupied buildings. These worksessions considered the issues/concerns of interested and impacted parties prior to the drafting of legislation. The Department of Housing and Community

Development, Office of Law, Department of Environmental Resources and municipalities participated in these worksessions.

The existing building code requires that the exterior shell of buildings be secure. In unoccupied buildings, these openings are required to be boarded up to prevent unauthorized entrance or use. The Building Official oversees securing buildings to prevent a danger to the community. However, once a building is boarded and secured, it is deemed in compliance with the building code. The issue is that boarded buildings advertise the fact that the building is vacant and not monitored on a regular basis. Based on this information, how long should a building be allowed to remain unoccupied, but made safe by boarding, before condemned and razed?

CB-30-2000 would amend the County Building Code to include language that would eliminate some of the concerns identified above.

The Office of Audits and Investigations finds that there may be some positive fiscal impact on the County as a result of enacting CB-30-2000.

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION/FISCAL IMPACT**

**(Includes reason for proposal, as well as any unique statutory requirements)**

The existing law permits unoccupied and abandoned buildings to be “made safe” by covering doors and windows with boards or other secure coverings. Boarded buildings indicate a lack of economic vitality and advertise to criminal elements a lack of supervision of such structures. The proposed legislation mandates time and materials standards for securing buildings to reduce the negative impact upon the remaining occupied buildings in the neighborhood and provides for significant fines until the boarded condition is remedied by restoration of the structure to a serviceable condition.

### **CODE INDEX TOPICS:**