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1 **HOUSE BILL NO. 377**

2 Offered January 14, 2026

3 Prefiled January 12, 2026

4 *A BILL to amend and reenact § 36-99 of the Code of Virginia, relating to the Uniform Statewide Building*
5 *Code; amendments; energy efficiency and conservation.*

6 Patron—Bennett-Parker

7 Committee Referral Pending

8 **Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**9 **1. That § 36-99 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:**10 **§ 36-99. Provisions of Code; modifications.**11 A. The Building Code shall prescribe building regulations to be complied with in the construction and
12 rehabilitation of buildings and structures, and the equipment therein as defined in § 36-97, and shall prescribe
13 regulations to ensure that such buildings and structures are properly maintained, and shall also prescribe
14 procedures for the administration and enforcement of such regulations, including procedures to be used by
15 the local building department in the evaluation and granting of modifications for any provision of the
16 Building Code, provided the spirit and functional intent of the Building Code are observed and public health,
17 welfare and safety are assured. The provisions of the Building Code and modifications thereof shall be such
18 as to protect the health, safety and welfare of the residents of the Commonwealth, provided that buildings and
19 structures should be permitted to be constructed, rehabilitated and maintained at the least possible cost
20 consistent with recognized standards of health, safety, energy conservation and water conservation, including
21 provisions necessary to prevent overcrowding, rodent or insect infestation, and garbage accumulation; and
22 barrier-free provisions for individuals with physical disabilities and aged individuals. Such regulations shall
23 be reasonable and appropriate to the objectives of this chapter.24 B. In formulating the Code provisions, the Board shall have due regard for generally accepted standards as
25 recommended by nationally recognized organizations, including, but not limited to, the standards of the
26 International Code Council and the National Fire Protection Association. Notwithstanding the provisions of
27 this section, farm buildings and structures shall be exempt from the provisions of the Building Code, except
28 for a building or a portion of a building located on a farm that is operated as a restaurant as defined in
29 § 35.1-1 and licensed as such by the Board of Health pursuant to Chapter 2 (§ 35.1-11 et seq.) of Title 35.1.
30 However, farm buildings and structures lying within a flood plain or in a mudslide-prone area shall be subject
31 to flood-proofing regulations or mudslide regulations, as applicable. However, any farm building or structure
32 (i) where the public is invited to enter for an agritourism activity, as that term is defined in § 3.2-6400, for
33 recreational, entertainment, or educational purposes and (ii) that is used for display, sampling, or sale of
34 agricultural, horticultural, floricultural, or silvicultural products produced on the farm or the sale of
35 agricultural-related or silvicultural-related items incidental to the agricultural operation shall have:

36 1. Portable fire extinguishers for the purpose of fire suppression;

37 2. A simple written plan in case of an emergency, but such plan shall not be construed to be interpreted as
38 a fire evacuation plan under the Uniform Statewide Building Code or any other local requirements; and39 3. A sign posted in a conspicuous place upon entry to the farm building or structure that states that "This
40 building is EXEMPT from the Uniform Statewide Building Code. Be alert to exits in the event of a fire or
41 other emergencies." Such sign shall be placed in a clearly visible location near the entrance to such farm
42 building or structure. The notice shall consist of a sign no smaller than 24 inches by 36 inches with clearly
43 legible black letters, with each letter to be a minimum of one inch in height.44 C. Where practical, the Code provisions shall be stated in terms of required level of performance, so as to
45 facilitate the prompt acceptance of new building materials and methods. When generally recognized
46 standards of performance are not available, such provisions shall provide for acceptance of materials and
47 methods whose performance has been found by the local building department, on the basis of reliable test and
48 evaluation data, presented by the proponent, to be substantially equal in safety to those specified.49 D. *The Board shall adopt amendments to the Building Code within 18 months of publication of a new*
50 *version of the International Code Council's International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) to incorporate*
51 *the latest IECC standards related to energy efficiency and conservation. Such standards shall be at least as*
52 *stringent as those standards contained in the newest version of the IECC. For purposes of this subsection, a*
53 *standard shall be deemed to be as stringent as a standard contained in the IECC if such standard would*
54 *perform the same function as that contained in the IECC without using more energy than would be used*
55 *under the IECC standard. In conducting its review, the Board shall assess whether proposed amendments to*
56 *the existing IECC standards would be at least as stringent as the standards contained in the newest version of*

INTRODUCED

HB37

59 *the IECC standards while benefiting the public health, safety, and welfare, including potential energy savings*
60 *and air quality benefits over time compared to the cost of initial construction. Updated IECC standards shall*
61 *be enforced by the Board no later than 12 months after adoption.*

62 *E. The Board, upon a finding that sufficient allegations exist regarding failures noted in several localities*
63 *of performance standards by either building materials, methods, or design, may conduct hearings on such*
64 *allegations if it determines that such alleged failures, if proven, would have an adverse impact on the health,*
65 *safety, or welfare of the citizens of the Commonwealth. After at least 21 days' written notice, the Board shall*
66 *convene a hearing to consider such allegations. Such notice shall be given to the known manufacturers of the*
67 *subject building material and as many other interested parties, industry representatives, and trade groups as*
68 *can reasonably be identified. Following the hearing, the Board, upon finding that (i) the current technical or*
69 *administrative Code provisions allow use of or result in defective or deficient building materials, methods, or*
70 *designs, and (ii) immediate action is necessary to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of the*
71 *Commonwealth, may issue amended regulations establishing interim performance standards and Code*
72 *provisions for the installation, application, and use of such building materials, methods or designs in the*
73 *Commonwealth. Such amended regulations shall become effective upon their publication in the Virginia*
74 *Register of Regulations. Any amendments to regulations adopted pursuant to this subsection shall become*
75 *effective upon their publication in the Virginia Register of Regulations and shall be effective for a period of*
76 *24 months or until adopted, modified, or repealed by the Board.*