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RE: SUPPORT of Connecticut House Bill 6378

DATE: 04 Mar 11

TO: The Connecticut Committee on Public Safety and Security ~

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today in SUPPORT of HB6378.

In addition to my present position I have a 32 year history in the fire service as well as holding certifications as a NY State Code Enforcement Official and an NFPA Certified Fire Protection Specialist. I was also a committee member of the NY State Codes Council special Residential (Fire) Sprinkler Committee.

Many proponents have supplied facts with their testimony today; the opponents may have provided what they consider to be statistics and data. What carries the most weight? The ACTUAL statistics and data is what counts. Speculating the negatives is not what made this country great. Data and statistics of what is actually occurring in the many areas of the United States that already require fire sprinklers in new homes and not the constant barrage of speculative "what ifs". Questions do need to be answered, but many questions can be addressed by paying attention to the facts.

Areas that have the statistics we need such as; 75 communities in Northern Illinois, dozens of communities in California and several in NY state, communities in GA, FL, ME as well as 12 counties in Maryland covering 90% of Maryland's population. Scottsdale, AZ, which has had an Ordinance in place for near 25 years and after hundreds of fires since the inception of the Ordinance, has never had a fire related death in a fire sprinklered home but has lost nine human lives in older, pre-Ordinance construction.

The facts, the hard data, and the actual statistics are contained in the many ordinances which go back almost 30 years.

What IS really happening in the United States?

- Homebuilders are building with fire sprinklers without major issues and are still making a profit.
- Homebuyers are NOT being out priced from buying a home.
- Houses in municipalities and counties with fire sprinkler requirements are selling at the identical rate as areas that do not.
- Insurance carriers are offering discounts and NONE charge a fee for having a fire sprinkler system.
- Water purveyors are cooperatively working with the issue of water supply.

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- Homeowners are comfortable with the fire sprinklers and the simple, basic inspection requirements of making sure the valve is on and the gauge shows pressure.
- Fire departments are less strained.
- Fire sprinklers have NOT been mysteriously activating.
- Fire injuries are lessened in number as well as severity.
- Occupants of fire sprinklered homes do not and will doubtfully die by fire in these homes.

It is time for the Flat Earth Society to realize that fire sprinklers are the new world and that the ships will not sail off the edge of the Earth.

We also cannot ignore inherent environmental issues that are an added benefit of automatic fire sprinklers. Recent studies in the UK as well as live fire tests conducted in October 2009 at FM Global show that fires in homes with automatic fire sprinklers reduce Greenhouse Gas production by 98%, reduce fire damage by 97%, and reduce water usage by 90% also reducing contaminated runoff into our aquifers and ponds or lakes.

To conclude, the discussion always comes down to the cost in these discussions of which there have been hundreds across the country.

The fact is that a \$300,000 home built without fire sprinklers costs \$300,000 and a \$300,000 home built with fire sprinklers will still cost \$300,000. Homebuyers are driven by what their monthly mortgage payment will be. Homebuilders, architects, and homebuyers have been negotiating home prices based on what the market will bear for decades. Why is it now that no one seems to have this ability any longer?

Please move HB6378 forward favorably.

I am available to answer your questions at any time and I thank you for your time and for conducting this hearing.

Sincerely,

Dominick G. Kasmauskas CFPS

*Established in 1905, the National Fire Sprinkler Association (NFSA) is the voice of the fire sprinkler industry. NFSA leads the drive to get life-saving fire sprinklers into all buildings; provides support and resources for its members - fire sprinkler contractors, manufacturers and suppliers; and educates authorities having jurisdiction of fire control matters. Headquartered in Patterson, N.Y., NFSA has regional operations offices throughout the country.*