



HOME BUILDERS ASSOCIATION OF CONNECTICUT, INC.

3 Regency Drive, Suite 204, Bloomfield, CT 06002
Tel: 860-216-5858 Fax: 860-206-8954 Web: www.hbact.org

*Your Home
Is Our
Business*

February 21, 2012

To: Senator Joseph Crisco, Jr., Co-Chair
Representative Robert Megna, Co-Chair
Members of the Insurance & Real Estate Committee

From: Bill Ethier, CAE, Chief Executive Officer

Re: **Raised Bill 5141, AAC Concerning Disclosure of Smoke Detectors and Carbon Monoxide Detectors on the Residential Property Condition Disclosure Report**

The HBA of Connecticut is a professional trade association with about one thousand (1,000) member firms statewide employing tens of thousands of CT's citizens. Our members are residential and commercial builders, land developers, remodelers, general contractors, subcontractors, suppliers and those businesses and professionals that provide services to our diverse industry. Our members build 70% to 80% of all new homes and apartments in the state each year. **We support Raised Bill 5141 and suggest making it stronger to ensure its safety goal is achieved.**

There is an exception to every rule. The rule that says you cannot legislate common sense is, and should be, broken by adopting RB 5141. RB 5141 will save lives for little cost and effort. We also offer our expertise on current requirements as a resource to the committee.

We know from research studies and work over many years on fire safety issues in new home construction that smoke detectors and CO detectors save lives. It is simply foolish for anyone to not have these relatively inexpensive yet life-saving devices in their home. Smoke and CO detectors are already required to be installed in new home construction. Since 1984, smoke detectors have been hard wired, with battery backup, in all new homes. As evidence of their life-safety value, we have been unable to find any fire death in a CT one or two family home built after 1984. Many other fire-safety building code improvements were also adopted around that time as well. CO detectors were required in 2005 in all new construction, with some common sense exceptions. In addition, smoke and CO detectors are required to be installed whenever home improvement work is done that requires a building permit be issued, again with some exceptions. The problem is, however, reaching additional existing homes to ensure they have these life safety devices.

Other than certain permitted home improvement work, the only other trigger point to reach into an existing home is at the point of transfer. RB 5141 requires a simple disclosure on the property condition disclosure report - a good first step to address property transfers. However, to overcome the inherent weakness of CT's property condition disclosure form, the bill could be strengthened by requiring the seller to certify that smoke and CO detectors are installed and working properly or provide the buyer the opportunity to inspect such devices and obtain a certification from a home inspector. **Please support HB 5141 and consider our suggested amendment – it will save lives.** Thank you for considering our comments on this important legislation.

"Leading Our Members to Professional Excellence."

Serving the Residential Development & Construction Industry Through Advocacy, Education & Networking