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To Senator Timothy D. Larson, Representative Stephen D. Dargan and Members of the Public Safety Committee:

I am writing in strong opposition to House Bill 6972, which aims to alter the membership of the State Codes and Standards Committee by eliminating two Public Members and adding two more Fire Marshals, for a total of four Fire Marshals. This would make Fire Marshals the group with more members than any other segment of the population represented. Currently that group is the public, which makes sense since the public members come from all different walks of life and generally have no specific agenda, unlike those members that represent a specific discipline.

Recently, small but vocal groups of Fire Marshals have attempted to make radical changes in the building and fire safety codes of our state by proposing a requirement to install automatic fire sprinklers in one- and two-family homes and by recommending adoption of a fire safety code written by a different publisher than the building code; and thus containing conflicting requirements. Because the Codes and Standards Committee is not skewed towards a specific interest group, those proposals, after careful consideration, were defeated. This latest legislative effort is obviously an attempt at a path for them to take greater control of the Committee to force their desires on a group that otherwise looks at code change proposals in a fair and balanced way.

Prior to my serving as State Building Inspector, I was a member of the State Codes and Standards Committee and I worked closely with the Committee during my tenure with the State. I recall many spirited debates regarding various aspects of the building and fire safety codes. I also recall how the balanced membership of the various working subcommittees and the Committee itself resulted in codes that worked well for our state and the residents of it, by weighing all factors before making a final decision. If the membership is allowed to be skewed towards one viewpoint, that balance will be upset to the detriment of the codes. I urge you to vote against approval of HB 6972.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony,



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