



25 Massachusetts Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20001
Phone: 202-346-1100

March 2, 2015

Senator Timothy D. Larson
Co-Chair, Public Safety and Security
Committee
Legislative Office Building
Room 3600
Hartford, CT 06106-1591

Rep. Stephen D. Dargan
Co-Chair, Public Safety and Security
Committee
Legislative Office Building
Room 3603
Hartford, CT 06106-1591

Dear Chairmen Larson and Dargan:

In advance of the hearing tomorrow on proposed HB 1012 and SB 1012, Google would like to share comments on these bills. While we appreciate Connecticut's interest in promoting public safety through longer-lasting batteries, unfortunately these bills fail to account for advanced technologies available now and in the future to be deployed in your state. Google respectfully asks for your consideration of amendments that can strengthen this legislation and improve home and building safety.

Like Connecticut, several states are considering laws that would require 10-year sealed batteries in smoke detectors, but with exemptions for advanced technologies that improve user safety. Smoke alarms that offer multi-sensing technologies or that use a low frequency radio transmitter to provide wireless interconnection among devices often perform functions that a 10-year battery cannot support. Newer devices, such as the Nest Protect combination smoke and carbon monoxide alarm, make these and other innovations available to consumers. The Nest Protect also alerts consumers in advance when the battery for their alarm is getting low, so that they can replace it before the alarm begins chirping or stops working. This helps ensure that no one is ever without a working smoke or carbon monoxide detector. States such as California have recognized the benefits of new technologies by passing 10-year battery laws that include exemptions to allow for current and future advanced technologies that these batteries do not support. On the contrary, imposing mandates without exceptions will stifle the deployment of advanced technologies in this space and could unintentionally compromise fire safety.

In order to encourage existing and future advanced technologies in this sector, we would suggest the following amendments (in italics and underlined) to the legislation:

“Section 1. Section 29-292 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2015*):

(iv) residential buildings designed to be occupied by one or more families requiring any

equipment powered by a battery that is installed on or after October 1, 2015, to be powered by a nonreplaceable and nonremovable battery that can power the equipment for at least ten years. The battery requirements of this section shall not apply to devices that use a low-power radio frequency wireless communication signal or contain multiple sensors (such as a smoke alarm combined with a carbon monoxide alarm), or such other devices as the State Fire Marshal shall designate through its regulatory process.”

Google, Nest, and other companies are actively working with state legislators and fire marshals to ensure that states remain open to advancements in this critical sector, and we welcome the ability to work with leaders in Connecticut. We believe these amendments to the bills take account of these positive emerging technologies without significantly impacting the goals of the legislation.

Thank you for your consideration, and I would be happy to field questions about these comments or our position.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ron Barnes", is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Ron Barnes
Head of State Legislative Affairs