



Senate Bill 86
An Act Concerning The Fire Safety Code And One, Two, and Three-Family Dwellings

Testimony of Commissioner Melody A. Currey

Planning & Development Committee
February 19, 2016

The Department of Administrative Services (DAS) houses the Office of the State Fire Marshal and the Office of the State Building Inspector, which are responsible for State Fire Safety Code, State Fire Prevention Code, the State Building Code and other code-related matters. DAS offers the following comments on **Senate Bill 86, "An Act Concerning the Fire Safety Code and One, Two, and Three-Family Dwellings."**

C.G.S. § 29-292 requires the State Fire Marshal, in consultation with the Codes and Standards Committee, to adopt and administer a Fire Safety Code. Currently, the statute dictates that the Fire Safety Code shall "provide for reasonable safety from fire, smoke, and panic therefrom, in all buildings and areas adjacent thereto except in private dwellings occupied by one or two families..." (Emphasis added.)

The statute further requires that the Code include provisions for the following:

- Carbon monoxide detection and warning equipment in new non-exempt residential buildings for which a building permit for new occupancy is issued on or after October 1, 2005, and
- Smoke detection and warning equipment in residential buildings designed to be occupied by two or more families;
- Equipment complying with the Fire Safety Code in new residential buildings designed to be occupied by one family for which a building permit for new occupancy was issued on or after October 1, 1978 requiring; and
- Equipment capable of operation using alternating current and batteries in new residential buildings designed to be occupied by one or more families for which a building permit for new occupancy was issued on or after October 1, 1985.

Senate Bill 86 amends C.G.S. § 29-292 to exempt three family homes from the existing Code requirements, including the requirement to have carbon monoxide detection and warning equipment.



Senate Bill 86 also seeks to amend C.G.S. §29-296 to give the office of the State Fire Marshal the authority to grant additional variations or exemptions from the code “where compliance with the code would cause impairment or destruction of the features of a historic structure or landmark, as defined in section 22a-19a, which is used as a private dwelling and occupied by one, two or three families.”

DAS is concerned about the potential risk to public safety presented by this bill, and as such, opposes this bill as currently drafted. If the intent is to allow the State Fire Marshal to grant exemptions based on the historic value of a building, DAS would request clarifying language that such exemptions could be granted only when the State Fire Marshal determines that any such variation or exemption or approved equivalent or alternative compliance secures the public safety.

We thank the Committee for allowing us to provide comment.