

Testimony of: Raymond S. Steadward Jr. Bloomfield Building Official/ CBOA president

Tuesday March 1, 2016

Chairman Dargan, Chairman Larson, Members of the Public Safety and Security Committee, for the record my name is Raymond S. Steadward Jr. from the Town of Bloomfield and President of Connecticut Building Officials Association and I am here to testify in opposition of:

SB-238

AN ACT CONCERNING ADOPTION OF MUNICIPAL ORDINANCES REGARDING AUTOMATIC FIRE EXTINGUISHING SYSTEMS IN NEW RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS.

I would like to thank the committee for the opportunity to submit testimony here today.

I would like to offer this testimony in opposition to this bill for several reasons. First it is in contradiction of C.G.S. 29-253 and our "one State Code" concept, and by bypassing the State Building Code and Codes and Standards, does not allow any independent interpretation or appeal for hardship. Secondly the way it is worded and the way the State Building Code works would cause existing homes to be sprinklered when additions were made (regardless of size) and possibly when remodeling. Here is the text from the building code:

R110.1 Use and occupancy. Pursuant to subsection (a) of section 29-265 of the Connecticut General Statutes, no building or structure erected or altered in any municipality after October 1, 1970, shall be occupied or used, in whole or in part, until a certificate of occupancy has been issued by the building official, certifying that such building, structure or work performed pursuant to the building permit substantially conforms to the provisions of the State Building Code. Nothing in the code shall require the removal, alteration or abandonment of, or prevent the continuance of the use and occupancy of, any single-family dwelling but within six years of the date of occupancy of such dwelling after substantial completion of construction of, alteration to or addition to such dwelling, or of a building lawfully existing on October 1, 1945, except as may be necessary for the safety of life or property. The use of a building or premises shall not be deemed to have changed because of a temporary vacancy or change of ownership or tenancy.

Traditionally, C of O's have been only issued for newly habitable or occupiable space. If you finish your basement, we issue a C of O, if you build an addition (regardless of size) we issue a C of O. The verbiage in the code specifically references alterations requiring a C of O which could be construed to be almost any remodeling in a 1 or 2 family dwelling. Kitchen and bath remodels could all be covered under the definition of alteration. Under the proposed legislation, this type of work could now drive a mandate to sprinkler the entire building, not just the area altered or added. This would put a huge financial burden on existing building owners not just an increase in the cost of a newly constructed home.