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State of Connecticut
Public Safety and Security Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 3600
Hartford, CT 06106

RE: Raised Bill No. 238 **- AN ACT CONCERNING ADOPTION OF MUNICIPAL ORDINANCES REGARDING AUTOMATIC FIRE EXTINGUISHING SYSTEMS IN NEW RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS.**

Members of the Joint Committee on Public Safety & Security,

My name is Robert Duval and I am the New England Regional Director for the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), and the Fire Chief of the Atwood Hose Fire Company located in Wauregan, CT. The mission of NFPA, which was established in 1896, is to reduce the worldwide burden of fire and other hazards on the quality of life by providing and advocating consensus codes and standards, research, training, and education. I write to express NFPA's strong support for fire sprinklers in newly constructed two-family homes as contained in all model building codes.

It is our request that this Committee vote favorably on SB 238 and approve the requirement for a local municipality option to allow automatic fire sprinklers in all new one and two-family homes beginning October 1, 2016.

The latest NFPA statistics reflect that U.S. fire departments responded to more than 367,500 home structure fires in 2014 (74% of all structure fires). These fires caused:

- 2,745 civilian fire deaths (84% of all civilian fire deaths)
- 11,825 civilian fire injuries (75% of all civilian fire injuries)
- Nearly $7 billion in direct damage

Fire in the home poses one of the biggest threats to the people of Connecticut. Those at greatest risk are:

- Older adults – over age 65
- Children – under 5 years old
- Persons with disabilities

These high risk groups may not be able to exit on their own, even with working smoke alarms. They may need the additional escape time provided by home fire sprinklers. Residential sprinkler systems designed to NFPA 13D provide ten minutes worth of escape time.

Fire Sprinklers Reduce Civilian Fire Death and Costs:

- Sprinklers reduce civilian fire deaths by 83%.
- Civilian fire death cost reduction of $10.4 billion per year

Residential sprinklers also provide a huge advantage for fire fighter safety. Sixty-four fire fighters died in the line of duty in the US in 2014. Sixty-four percent of fireground fatalities occurred in residential buildings. Sprinklers are designed to control a fire for a period of time (and often suppress the fire) giving residents time to escape and fire fighters time to respond and extinguish the fire before it effects the structural integrity of the building.

Home fire sprinklers are the right choice for Connecticut. Sprinklers have been protecting lives for over 100 years throughout the United States. All model building codes now require fire sprinklers in new one and two-family dwellings. Building homes without fire sprinklers equates to building substandard housing. I respectfully request this Committee vote favorably on this House Bill and join California, Maryland, the District of Columbia and hundreds of other forward thinking communities across the United States.

While we cannot save those who perished in horrific home fires in Connecticut in the past, your actions can save future generations from dying in home fires and better protect your first responders. Fire sprinklers are a proven technology that should not be overlooked in Connecticut.

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