



**HOME BUILDERS & REMODELERS ASSOCIATION  
OF CONNECTICUT, INC.**

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*Your Home  
Is Our  
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**PLEASE OPPOSE HB 5278 Mandating Fire Sprinklers in 2-Family  
New Homes and SB 238, a Local Option for Mandating Sprinklers**

- **Sprinklers in NEW 1&2 Family Homes Will Not Save Lives** because most residential fires (88 – 90%) and almost all fire deaths and serious injuries occur in homes that are 30 or more years old. NFPA's own data shows for every 1,000 home fires you have a 99.62% survival rate if you have working smoke detectors and you have a 99.82% survival rate with both smoke detectors and sprinklers. Smoke detectors, costing \$500-\$600 per home, gets you to almost 100%. Does an additional \$15,000 to \$20,000+ for sprinklers justify the incremental 0.2% increase, but still shy of 100%? The CT Fire Chiefs Assoc. states only that with fire sprinklers, "the fire death rate per 1,000 ...fires was lower by 82%." Their math is both wrong and hides the true tiny incremental increase in life safety for an enormous cost.
- **Installing sprinklers in new 1&2 family homes addresses the wrong homes. Homes built to older codes are far more dangerous. New homes are simply built better than they used to be**, incorporating better fire stopping materials, better electrical systems and installations, better egress (i.e., ways to get out of a home), and the hard wiring (with battery backup) of smoke detectors. **And, light frame (i.e., truss) construction – blamed by sprinkler proponents for safety issues – is not new**; it's been used in home construction for over 50 years.
- **The cost for individual new home buyers would be \$10,000 for a very small home to \$20,000 and up for a typical new 1 or 2 family home**. They cost \$6.00/sq ft or more (real quotes today). A Sprinkler mandate will make unaffordable a growing trend to build 2 family units, such as in-law and accessory apartments. If renters want sprinkler protection they can rent any number of the growing multi-family apartments that are being built across the state.
- **Fire sprinklers are a choice home buyers should make for themselves**. All home builders would be happy to install a fire sprinkler system in a new home if requested to do so by their customer – and all home builders must by law inform every buyer about fire sprinklers. But, almost ALL home buyers DO NOT WANT sprinklers; they're viewed as a liability.
- **Fire deaths in homes have been decreasing nationally and recent data shows one death for every 92,000 homes in CT**. Therefore, we will have to put sprinklers in 92,000 new homes, a societal cost of far over \$1 billion, to protect, on average, that one life. This assumes sprinklers work 100% of the time (**they don't**) and that home owners perform necessary annual maintenance (**they won't**), and ignores the fact that **almost all deadly fires occur in homes built before 1985**.
- **Adding costs to new homes keeps potential buyers in older homes, potentially increasing their risk of fire-related injuries or death**. Nationally, every \$1,000 in increased price for a home knocks 217,000 buyers out of that market. Some portion of those buyers will, therefore, be forced to stay put in older homes or choose a less expensive, perhaps older, existing home versus a new home. **Since the vast majority of fire-related deaths occur in older homes, requiring sprinklers in newly constructed homes – even just 2-family homes, could actually increase a person's risk of injury and death from a home fire by keeping them in an older home**.
- **SB 238's local option mandate would destroy 45 years of having a statewide mandatory building code** – one of the few regulatory benefits available in CT to the building and design industry. **We urge you to NOT allow this mandate even by local option**.
- **Before requiring sprinklers at \$15,000 to \$20,000 or more for new 1&2 family homes, ask why you have not installed them yourself – it does not cost that much more to put them into an existing home to protect your own family**.