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Alaska State Legislature

Sponsor Statement for CS SB 129

The Committee Substitute for Senate Bill 129 is a proactive response to a national movement to require fire sprinkler systems in one and two-family dwellings. This legislation does not take away local control from municipalities and cities, it simply lays the framework for a public process necessary to mandate sprinklers in certain areas.

What CSSB 129 seeks to avoid is broad mandates without public involvement for home sprinkler systems that will drive up costs for consumers in areas where sprinklers may not necessarily be needed.

Residential fire sprinkler systems are expensive. Conservative estimates indicate that Alaskans could expect to pay between 3 to 5 dollars per square foot to have a system included in the construction of their new home

According to the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), for each additional \$1,000 added to the price of a home, 250,000 potential buyers are priced out of the market. The NAHB estimates the entire cost of an average home sprinklers system at \$3,000.

Furthermore, changes in residential construction technology over the last twenty years have dramatically dropped the number of fatal fires in the U.S. including Alaska.

This committee substitute realizes there may be cases in Alaska where requiring sprinklers in one and two-family dwellings is necessary. Often, the geography at the location of new builds is such that firefighters cannot make it swiftly to a burning home. In those cases, CSSB 129 **would not** prohibit sprinkler mandates, so long as the municipality or city follows the public process set out in the bill.

The Committee Substitute for Senate Bill 129 will continue to allow elected officials in municipalities and cities to explore a mandate on sprinklers, but will ensure the public is involved in the transparent process and government does not overstep its regulatory bounds.

I hope you will support this bill to provide a clear, fair public process to mandate technology that will affect the bottom line price of a new home.