



# Interior Fire Chiefs Association

PO Box 70986, Fairbanks, AK 99707

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March 18, 2009

Senator Donny Olson,  
Chairman, Community & Regional Affairs Committee

Dear Senator Olson,

The Interior Fire Chiefs Association represents the Fire and Emergency Services Organizations in the Interior of Alaska. This letter is being sent on behalf of our members to express our strong opposition to Senate Bill 129 "An Act relating to state and municipal building code requirements for fire sprinkler systems in certain residential buildings."

This bill attempts to prevent the State of Alaska from adopting regulations for residential sprinkler systems. This is not necessary. I have included a copy of the e-mail response with regards to a question I posed to the State Fire Marshal Dave Tyler on this subject. And he states the following.

"The Division of Fire and Life Safety **does not** have the statutory authority to adopt regulations for residential occupancies which have three units or less. We would need to get statutory authority from the legislature before we could adopt the IRC."

More importantly this bill attempts to take away the ability of a local jurisdiction to make the determination on how best to protect the residents of their community. The International Residential Code (IRC) is a model code that local jurisdictions must adopt. Appendix P of the IRC gives local jurisdictions **the option** to require fire sprinklers through adoption of this appendix. There is no national mandate to do so, it is totally up to local jurisdictions to make that determination.

SB129 would take away from local government bodies, building officials, fire officials, and citizens the ability to use a proven tool to help protect the lives and property of their residents. The Interior Fire Chiefs Association stands opposed to SB129.

If you have any additional questions you may contact me at 907-488-3400.

Sincerely,

Jeff Tucker, Fire Chief  
North Star Volunteer Fire Department

On behalf of Buddy Lane, Fire Chief  
City of North Pole Fire Department  
President, Interior Fire Chiefs Association

Chief Tucker,

Here is the information you requested. The Division of Fire and Life Safety **does not** have the statutory authority to adopt regulations for residential occupancies which have three units or less. We would need to get statutory authority from the legislature before we could adopt the IRC. If we were given the authority to adopt the IRC I am sure that it would also be in statute that we could not adopt the sprinkler portion on a statewide basis. I have attached a copy of the statute that answers your question below. Please let me know if there is anything else I can help with.

Sec. 18.70.080. Regulations.

(a) The Department of Public Safety shall adopt regulations for the purpose of protecting life and property from fire and explosion by establishing minimum standards for

(1) fire detection and suppression equipment;

(2) fire and life safety criteria in commercial, industrial, business, institutional, or other public buildings, and buildings used for residential purposes containing **four or more dwelling units**;

(3) any activity in which combustible or explosive materials are stored or handled in commercial quantities;

(4) conditions or activities carried on outside a building described in (2) or (3) of this subsection likely to cause injury to persons or property.

(b) The commissioner of public safety may establish by regulation and the department may charge reasonable fees for fire and life safety plan checks made to determine compliance with regulations adopted under (a)(2) of this section



David L. Tyler  
State Fire Marshal

*"Public Safety Through Public Service"*