



ALASKA PROFESSIONAL FIRE FIGHTERS ASSOCIATION

PO Box 111222 Anchorage, AK 99511

North Pole – Fairbanks – Shemya – Anchorage – Juneau – Ketchikan – Sitka

alaskapffa.org



January 10, 2022

HB 218 Letter of Support

Representative Tuck,

The Alaska Professional Firefighters Association represents over 500 professional fire fighters and emergency responders across the State of Alaska. On behalf of our membership, I am writing to express our strong support for HB 218.

Heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems found in modern buildings are required to contain fire and smoke dampers, which are essential fire safety elements put in place to contain the spread of smoke and fire through a building should a fire occur. When properly installed and maintained, these dampers are designed to save lives and property by preventing the spread of smoke and fire thorough an entire building. Because an HVAC system penetrates every space inside a building, it is paramount that fire and smoke dampers are kept in good working order so that they can do their job by closing and preventing the spread of fire and smoke throughout an entire building during a fire.

There are numerous historical examples of how bad the outcome can be when these dampers do not function properly. Perhaps the most well-known example is the MGM Grand Hotel fire in 1980, when a fire in the casino level was allowed to spread unchecked through an HVAC system that did not have properly maintained fire and smoke dampers. Large volumes of smoke spread to the upper levels of the hotel and sadly 85 people perished while over 700 were injured, including 14 fire fighters.

This type of tragedy is preventable by ensuring that our fire control systems, including fire and smoke dampers, are properly maintained on a regular basis by an individual that is certified to do this work. This is exactly what HB 218 attempts to accomplish by establishing a standard for inspection and testing of fire and smoke dampers in our state. By taking this step, the State of Alaska would be joining many communities and states across the county in recognizing the importance of ensuring that our buildings are safe for their occupants and for fire fighters in the case of an emergency.

The AKPFFA strongly supports HB 218 and we thank you for bringing this important issue forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Miranda".

Paul Miranda

President

Alaska Professional Firefighters Association

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January 13, 2022

Dear Representative Chris Tuck,

I am writing this letter in support of House Bill 218 Smoke/Fire Dampers & Smoke Control Systems. As the Director of Facilities Management at the Alaska Regional Hospital I understand the importance of having regular inspections and maintenance of the fire and smoke dampers in our hospitals.

Smoke & Fire Dampers systems have a proven track record of reducing property damage and increasing the safety of the general public and first responders during an emergency situation. Furthermore, I have learned that certified inspections are already done in many communities and have full support of emergency responders. By requiring technicians and contractors to be certified, you will increase public safety and prevent the next life-threatening situation from occurring.

Regards,


Seth Clark

Director of Facilities Management

Alaska Regional Hospital

March 02, 2022

Mr. Chris Tuck
Representative Majority Leader
State Capitol Room 216
Juneau AK, 99801

Dear Representative Tuck,

I would like to offer my support for House Bill No. 218.

First allow me to state that my letter of support is not on behalf of the Anchorage School District. Rather as a life-long resident of Anchorage, Alaska whom has been working in the HVAC profession in the greater Anchorage area for the past 19 years.

From my experience working as a HVAC sheet metal installer for 16 ½ years and for the Anchorage School District as Capital Planning & Construction's HVAC Construction Inspector for the last 2 ½ years, I can attest this bill will ultimately make buildings safer as well construction process more efficient. The impact of a properly designed, installed and maintained fire/ smoke damper system will make a difference of life or death when building occupants must make their way out during a fire, and emergency crews when entering buildings. This bill will greatly help assure certified people are installing, testing and maintaining these life safety devices.

Most building's fire/smoke damper systems are designed to be hidden out of plain sight. This common characteristic causes these units often go forgotten and miss managed. Driving maintenance cost up for replacement, repair or worse. The proper installation and maintenance performed by a certified trained person, brought forth by this initiative, will only increase the odds of fire/smoke dampers being operational at the unpredictable moment when needed most.

Amendment date March 2, 2022:

The only thing I would like to see added to a bill like this, is additional training access for individuals who wish to seek certification whom are not nor wish to be a member of a union, but have experience working with ventilation systems life safety devices.

I'm not pro, I'm not against unions. But I have inspected enough work from both union and non-union to see quality issues from accredited institutions such as Unions which outweighed quality issues from non-accredited affiliates as well the other way around.

In essence, I don't want to see an avenue for unions to hold a monopoly on training or inspection certifications. My goal for support of this bill is to assure these fire and smoke/ fire dampers are inspected by someone who cares about the matter.

Thanks again for your willingness to consider work on a bill of this nature.

Sincerely,



Lawrence "Edward" Powell, ID #JSM-2221
HVAC/QA Construction Inspector
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