



Alaska Professional Design Council

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MEMBER SOCIETIES

Alaska Society of
Professional Engineers
(ASPE)

Alaska Society of
Professional Land
Surveyors (ASPLS)

American Society of
Civil Engineers, Alaska
Section (ASCE)

American Society of
Landscape Architects,
Alaska Chapter (ASLA)

American Council of
Engineering Companies
of Alaska (ACEC)

American Society of
Interior Designers,
Alaska Chapter (ASID)

Institute of
Transportation
Engineers, Alaska
Section (ITE)

Structural Engineers
Association of Alaska
(SEAAK)

Position Statement

SB169/HB218 Smoke/Fire Dampers & Smoke Control Systems

The Alaska Professional Design Council (APDC) is a consortium of professional design organizations representing engineers, land surveyors, landscape architects, and interior designers. APDC is **OPPOSED** to this bill for the following reasons:

- The bill is unnecessary. The standards cited in Section 2 (in lines 4 to 7 of page 2) are already cited in the International Building Code and/or International Fire Code. Adding them to statute will be redundant and make them harder to modify or update.
- Having the standards in statute, whether they have particular years associated with them or merely require the latest edition, can lead to confusion. The adopted building codes cite specific versions of the standards, which may not be the latest editions because they are printed on differing schedules. As newer standards are developed, they may be in conflict with the current code. However, these newer standards will then be cited in the next codes and the two types of documents will be coordinated.
- The inspections required by this statute are occurring now. The reason hospitals can have an inspection every six years (as opposed to every four years) is because their certification process checks to make sure the inspections are being done. Other owners are doing inspections to satisfy insurance requirements. Some owners are not aware of the requirement, but that can be corrected by a public information campaign, not a statute change duplicating existing requirements.
- The MGM Grand fire cited in testimony in favor of this bill happened 42 years ago in another state. It resulted in numerous changes to building codes. This includes periodic inspections that are now required in the codes and standards. We know of no deaths related to inoperable dampers in Alaska.
- The presentation also stated that 70% of the deaths in fires are from smoke inhalation, while leaving out that residential buildings are the leading property type for fire deaths (72.2%), fire injuries (76.4%) and fire dollar loss (46.4%). According to the US Fire Administration, 70% of residential fire deaths occur in one- and two-family residences. These structures are unlikely to have any of the systems covered by the bill.
- The NFPA Standards cited only require that the inspectors be qualified by education and experience. They do not require qualification via an American National Standard Institute certified process. It is not clear how many inspectors in the State of Alaska would qualify under this standard. It would certainly preclude some of the people who are currently doing this work.

It may be worthwhile to evaluate other options for ensuring that these inspections are being done on the code required schedules. APDC stands ready to assist the Legislature, the State Fire Marshal, building owners, and other interested parties in developing an understanding of the scope of the problem and developing solutions that do not have the problems associated with the current bills.