



National Fire Protection Association

Southwest Regional Office - 7071 Warner Ave, F400 - Huntington Beach, CA 92647
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Raymond B. Bizal, P.E.
Southwest Regional Director

March 23, 2011

The Honorable Henry J.C. Aquino, Chair
Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs
House of Representatives
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 419
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

RE: HR 225, HRC 263: OPPOSE

Dear Chair Aquino and Members of the Committee:

This letter is in response to consideration of HR 225 and HCR 263 relating to the use of fire retardant coatings to reduce fire loss. We are opposed to the resolutions.

It appears that these two resolutions equate the fire and life safety benefits of home fire sprinklers with the application of fire retardant coatings. Make no mistake, fire retardant coatings do NOT provide an equivalent level of fire and life safety compared to the significant benefits of home fire sprinklers.

For over 100 years, NFPA has been a world leader in the promulgation of fire safety codes and standards. NFPA's nationally recognized fire and life safety and building codes set forth provisions requiring all homes to be provided with automatic fire sprinkler systems, as do all nationally recognized codes. No nationally recognized codes require the application of fire retardant coatings, even as an option to fire sprinklers. While fire retardant coatings may have some enhanced feature for protecting a structure, it does nothing for protecting against fire within the contents of the building, it does nothing to alert occupants or the fire department, and it does not actively provide protection for occupants to escape.

We encourage the State of Hawaii to consider meaningful and effective measures of fire safety for the protection of life and property against residential fires. And we hope the State of Hawaii will encourage the best protection available against residential fires – automatic fire sprinkler systems – as indicated in HR 47, HCR 54, SR 32 and SCR 58. Please vote NO on HR 225 and HCR 263.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "RBizal", is written over a horizontal line.

Raymond B. Bizal, P.E.
Southwest Regional Director

cc: Committee Members, State Fire Council



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

830 PUNCHBOWL STREET, ROOM 321
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March 23, 2011

The Honorable Henry Aquino, Chair
Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs
House of Representatives
State Capitol, Room 419
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Aquino:

Subject: H.C.R. 263/H.R. 225 Requesting the Installation of Automatic Sprinklers or Application of Certified Fire-Retardant Coatings in Newly Constructed One- and Two-Family Residential Dwellings to be Required Under the State Building Code

I am Kenneth G. Silva, Chair of the State Fire Council (SFC) and Fire Chief of the Honolulu Fire Department (HFD). The SFC and the HFD strongly oppose H.C.R. 263/ H.R. 225 and offer the following comments:

1. Home fire sprinkler systems reduce heat, flames, and smoke from a fire, thus allowing residents valuable time to escape. The fatality risk decreases by 80% when sprinklers are present. Installing home fire sprinklers significantly reduces property loss in the event of a fire and homeowner insurance premiums and supports local fire service efforts. By requiring these life-saving devices in new homes, residents can enjoy the same level of safety found in offices, schools, apartments, and public buildings.
2. A properly applied and maintained fire-retardant coating is designed to passively contain the rate of fire spread; however, the combustible contents of a room will be the fuel that burns and causes the fire to spread and create hazardous conditions. There is a great deal of information regarding the reduction of fire deaths, injuries, and property losses due to properly operating automatic fire sprinklers.

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3. Since interior walls of one- and two-family dwellings are constructed with masonry or gypsum board, which are noncombustible, we believe that applying a fire-retardant coating to these surfaces would not be that much more effective, as fires burn the combustible contents in structures.
4. The 2009 edition of the International Residential Code, which the State Building Code Council is reviewing for adoption, requires automatic fire sprinklers in new one- and two-family dwellings. No such requirement exists for fire-retardant coatings in new one- and two-family dwellings.

The SFC and the HFD urge your committee's deferral on the passage of H.C.R. 263/
H.R. 225.

Should you have any questions, please call SFC Administrator Socrates Bratakos at
723-7151.

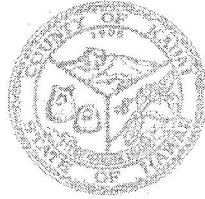
Sincerely,



KENNETH G. SILVA
Chair

KGS/LR:cn

Bernard P. Carvalho, Jr.
Mayor



Robert F. Westerman
Fire Chief

Gary K. Heu
Managing Director

John T. Blalock
Deputy Fire Chief

KAUA'I FIRE DEPARTMENT
County of Kaua'i, State of Hawai'i

3083 Akahi Street, Suite 101, Līhu'e, Hawai'i 96766
TEL (808) 241-4980 FAX (808) 241-6508

March 22, 2011

The Honorable Henry Aquino, Chair
Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs
House of Representatives
State Capitol, Room 419
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Aquino:

Subject: H.R. 225/H.C.R. 262 Requesting the Installation of Automatic Sprinklers or Application of Certified Fire-Retardant Coatings in Newly Constructed One-and Two-Family Residential Dwellings to be Required Under the State Building Code

I am Robert F. Westerman, Fire Chief of the Kauai Fire Department (KFD) and a member of the State Fire Council (SFC). The SFC and the KFD strongly oppose H.R. 225/H.C.R. 262 and offer the following comments:

1. Home fire sprinkler systems respond quickly to reduce heat, flames, and smoke from a fire, giving residents valuable time to escape. The risk of dying decreases by 80% when sprinklers are present. Installing home fire sprinklers significantly reduces property loss in the event of fire and homeowner insurance premiums and supports local fire service efforts. By requiring these life-saving devices in new homes, residents can enjoy the same level of safety found in offices, schools, apartments, and public buildings.
2. A properly applied and maintained fire-retardant coating is designed to passively contain the rate of fire spread. However, the combustible contents of a room will be the fuel that burns and causes the fire to spread and create hazardous conditions. There is much historical data and information regarding the reduction of fire deaths, injuries, and property losses due to properly operating automatic fire sprinklers.
3. Since interior walls of one-and two-family dwellings are constructed with masonry or gypsum board which are noncombustible, we believe applying a fire-retardant coating to these surfaces would not be that much more effective, as fires burn the combustible contents in structures.

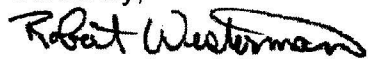
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4. The 2009 edition of the International Residential Code, which the State Building Code Council is currently reviewing for adoption, requires automatic fire sprinklers in new one-and two-family dwellings. No such requirement exists for fire-retardant coatings in new one-and two-family dwellings.

The SFC and the KFD urge your committee's deferral on the passage of H.R. 225/H.C.R. 263.

Please call me at (808) 241-4980 should you have any questions regarding this matter.

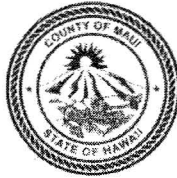
Sincerely,



Robert Westerman
Fire Chief, County of Kaua'i

RFW/eld

ALAN M. ARAKAWA
MAYOR



JEFFREY A. MURRAY
CHIEF

ROBERT M. SHIMADA
DEPUTY CHIEF

COUNTY OF MAUI
DEPARTMENT OF FIRE AND PUBLIC SAFETY

200 DAIRY ROAD
KAHULUI, MAUI, HAWAII 96732
(808) 270-7561
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EMAIL: fire@mauicounty.gov

March 22, 2011

The Honorable Henry Aquino, Chair
Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs
House of Representatives
State Capitol, Room 419
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Aquino:

Subject: H.R. 225/H.C.R. 262 Requesting the Installation of Automatic Sprinklers or Application of Certified Fire-Retardant Coatings in Newly Constructed One-and Two-Family Residential Dwellings to be Required Under the State Building Code

I am Jeffrey A. Murray, Fire Chief of the County of Maui, Department of Fire & Public Safety (MFD) and a member of the State Fire Council (SFC). The MFD and the SFC strongly oppose H.R. 225/H.C.R. 262 and offer the following comments:

1. Home fire sprinkler systems respond quickly to reduce heat, flames, and smoke from a fire, giving residents valuable time to escape. The risk of dying decreases by 80% when sprinklers are present. Installing home fire sprinklers significantly reduces property loss in the event of fire and homeowner insurance premiums and supports local fire service efforts. By requiring these life-saving devices in new homes, residents can enjoy the same level of safety found in offices, schools, apartments, and public buildings.
2. A properly applied and maintained fire-retardant coating is designed to control the rate of fire growth. There is no historical information to determine if fire-retardant coatings will in fact control, contain or extinguish residential structure fires. The combustible contents of a room will be the fuel that burns and causes the fire to spread and create hazardous conditions. However, there is much historical data

The Honorable Henry Aquino, Chair

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and information regarding the reduction of fire deaths, injuries, and property losses due to properly operating automatic fire sprinklers.

3. Since interior walls of one-and two-family dwellings are constructed with masonry or gypsum board which is noncombustible, we believe applying a fire-retardant coating to these surfaces would not be that much more effective, as fires burn the combustible contents in structures.
4. The 2009 edition of the International Residential Code requires automatic fire sprinklers in new one-and two-family dwellings. No such requirement exists for fire-retardant coatings in new one-and two-family dwellings.

The MFD and the SFC urge your committee's deferral on the passage of H.R. 225/H.C.R.

Should you have any questions, please call SFC Administrator Socrates Bratakos at 723-7151.

Sincerely,



JEFFREY A. MURRAY
Fire Chief

TO: Members of the Committee on Public Safety & Military Affairs

FROM: Natalie Iwasa
Honolulu, HI 96825
808-395-3233

HEARING: 10:30 a.m. Thursday, March 24, 2011

SUBJECT: HCR263/HR225 Requesting State Building Code Council to Require
Automatic Fire Sprinklers or Fire-Retardant Coatings in New One- and Two-
Family Homes

Aloha Chair Aquino, Vice Chair Cullen and Committee Members,

Thank you for allowing me to provide testimony in opposition to HCR263 and HR 225, which request the State Building Code Council to require automatic fire sprinklers or fire retardant coatings in new one- and two-bedroom homes. While the intent of these resolutions has merit, I ask you to please vote "no."

My husband and I have never owned a home and cannot currently afford one. Requiring sprinklers or fire retardant coatings in new homes would increase the cost of ownership and maintenance as well. Given all of the other issues the state and residents are facing today, I would much rather see our resources dedicated to those other areas.

Please vote "no."