



National Fire Protection Association

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LATE TESTIMONY

March 21, 2012

The Honorable Henry J.C. Aquino, Chair
House Committee on Public Safety, and Military Affairs
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: SB2397-OPPOSE

Dear Chair Aquino and Members of the Committee:

I write to you and the Committee today to express my strong opposition to SB2397, a bill that hinders local fire authorities from determining the best fire protection policy for their communities. This is a serious public safety issue. I have outlined some thoughts on why I am opposing SB2397.

At the very least, codes are designed to be adopted and implemented in their totality to make certain that when all code requirements are conformed to, a house is in its safest code compliant state to protect the occupants of the structure. When one component, such as fire sprinklers, is not installed in the structure, other requirements and structural components, which may have been lessened because of pre-supposed sprinkler protection, are now increasingly vulnerable to the effects of fire and may drastically increase the danger to the lives of the occupants, firefighters, and other rescuers who may respond to an incident of fire in the home. Adopting this legislation, and reducing the requirement of the code by prohibiting this adoption, is in effect allowing **SUB-STANDARD HOMES** to be built in your Counties and communities.

Ignores Reduced Life Safety: Most importantly, this bill will withhold the life-saving benefits of home fire sprinklers from the citizens in Hawaii. Each year, approximately 3,000 people die in home fires in the United States – more than all of the fatalities from natural disasters annually. In 2008, roughly 83% of all civilian fire deaths and 89% of all civilian fire injuries resulted from home structure fires. Home fire sprinklers would have saved the vast majority of these fire victims because sprinklers play a significant role in limiting life and property loss when a fire happens. For people that have a reported fire in their home, the risk of dying decreases by about 80 percent when sprinklers are present.

Interrupts Local Fire Policy: Local fire authorities rely on an array of tools – including automatic fire sprinklers – to combat the threat of fire and provide their public safety service. Local fire protection policy is based on many issues, such as local fire department deployment capabilities, firefighter safety needs, response-time goals, and insurance services rating needs. Home fire sprinklers can impact the community from local fire protection policy to local firefighting tactics and strategies. If passed, this bill will remove a valuable tool that may be used by fire departments to meet their local needs in providing the best public safety service to their communities.

Discounts Local Hearings: Local fire authorities, Counties and municipalities that have determined they want to require residential fire sprinklers still must provide an open and public hearing process. This local

hearing process will allow discussion on all the technical details relevant to their proposal. The issue will be considered at the local level in a public forum, where pertinent issues to local conditions may be considered.

Neglects Firefighter Safety: Residential fire sprinklers provide great assistance to firefighters, especially in congested metropolitan areas and rural settings, where it takes a longer for firefighters to arrive on scene. Fire sprinklers reduce the chance of "flashover" and keep the fire at bay, while the firefighters arrive and set up for firefighting operations. Fire sprinklers buy time before the structure collapses. Studies show that with new construction techniques, called light-weight truss construction, homes do not have much time under fire conditions and can collapse on responding firefighters. Fire sprinklers will alleviate that risk. This is a problem because statistics indicate that 62% of firefighter deaths occur at residential properties and 92% of those occurring in one and two family homes.

Representative Aquino, there are so many more reasons than these few provided in this letter that underscore the importance of not prohibiting local jurisdictions from making their own decisions for the level of safety they want to provide their residents and their public safety officials and responders. I implore you, for the sake of your constituents, the people of Hawaii and in the name of public safety; please do not provide a tool that allows for the construction of **SUB-STANDARD HOMES** in your communities. Additionally please don't disavow the communities in your State the right to make those decisions for themselves, please take the appropriate action to not move forward on SB2397.

Sincerely,



Jeffery L. Hudson
NFPA Regional Fire Sprinkler Specialist



LATE TESTIMONY

Hawaii Farm Bureau F E D E R A T I O N

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March 21, 2012

HEARING BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY & MILITARY AFFAIRS

TESTIMONY ON SB 2397, SD1, HD1 RELATING TO FIRE SPRINKLERS

Room 325
11:00 AM

Chair Aquino, Vice Chair Cullen, and Members of the Committee:

I am Brian Miyamoto, Chief Operating Officer and Government Affairs Liaison for the Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation (HFBF). Organized since 1948, the HFBF is comprised of 1,800 farm family members statewide, and serves as Hawaii's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate and advance the social, economic and educational interest of our diverse agricultural community.

HFBF **supports the intent of SB 2397 SD1, HD1 as it was originally proposed**, which would prohibit the requirement of installing or retrofitting of fire sprinklers for new or existing detached one- or two-family dwelling units in a structure used only for residential purposes. Requiring sprinklers would add substantially to the cost of building or renovating homes. It would be especially costly in the case of farm dwellings, which may be in areas not served by public water systems or where the spacing of hydrants exceeds residential standards. However, we have a **serious concern with SB 2397, SD1, HD1**.

In previous testimony, we requested that SB 2397, SD1 be amended to extend its prohibition of sprinkler requirements to non-residential agricultural and aquacultural buildings and structures located outside the urban zone. However, an amendment to the bill following last week's House Committee on Housing hearing would do just the opposite: exclude these structures from the exemption provided by SB 2397. We hope that this reversal of our request was simply an error, and respectfully request that these structures be **included in the exemption from sprinkler requirements, not excluded as SB 2397, SD1, HD1 currently states**.

HFBF is supporting other bills introduced this session that would reduce the cost and construction time of low-risk, non-residential farm structures by exempting these structures from county building permit requirements. Due to their location and functions, these buildings and structures present a lower risk of property damage and personal harm from fire than do dwelling units. Their exemption from permit requirements is necessary

to allow farmers to build, at reasonable cost, structures to protect their crops and equipment from thieves, vandals, and the weather. Prohibiting a requirement for sprinkler systems would remove one major potential cost of constructing these structures, and would therefore further the State's goal of greater food self-sufficiency.

I can be reached at (808) 848-2074 if you have any questions. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

LATE TESTIMONY

PBMtestimony

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Tuesday, March 20, 2012 9:07 PM
To: PBMtestimony
Cc: greg@ccs-hawaii.com
Subject: Testimony for SB2397 on 3/21/2012 11:00:00 AM

Testimony for PBM 3/21/2012 11:00:00 AM SB2397

Conference room: 309
Testifier position: Support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Greg Thielen
Organization: Complete Construction Services
E-mail: greg@ccs-hawaii.com
Submitted on: 3/20/2012

Comments:

Without this law the counties will adopt new building codes mandating fire sprinklers in new single family homes. This would hurt jobs and the construction industry as well as affordability of housing. Meanwhile this would provide no meaningful safety benefit. Please pass SB2397.

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GCA of Hawaii

GENERAL CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION OF HAWAII

Quality People. Quality Projects.

Uploaded via Capitol Website

March 21, 2012

TO: HONORABLE REPRESENTATIVES HENRY AQUINO, CHAIR, TY CULLEN, VICE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY & MILITARY AFFAIRS

SUBJECT: **SUPPORT OF S.B. 2397, SD1, RELATING TO FIRE SPRINKLERS.**
Prohibits counties from requiring installation or retrofitting of automatic fire sprinklers in new or existing one- or two-family dwelling units used only for residential purposes, provided that this does not apply to: (1) new homes that require a variance from access road or fire fighting water supply requirements; and (2) non-residential agricultural and aquacultural buildings and structures located outside the urban area. Effective January 1, 2025. (SB2397 HD1)

HEARING

DATE: Wednesday, March 21, 2012

TIME: 11:00 a.m.

PLACE: Conference Room 309

Dear Chair Aquino, Vice Chair Cullen and Members of the Committee:

The General Contractors Association (GCA) is an organization comprised of over six hundred (600) general contractors, subcontractors, and construction related firms. The GCA was established in 1932 and is celebrating its 80th anniversary this year; GCA remains the largest construction association in the State of Hawaii whose mission is to represent its members in all matters related to the construction industry, while improving the quality of construction and protecting the public interest. GCA supports S.B. 2397, SD1, HD1 Relating to Fire Sprinklers.

S.B. 2397, SD1, HD1 amends Chapter 46 of the Hawaii Revised Statutes by adding a new section that would prohibit any county from mandating the installation or retrofit of automatic fire sprinklers or such a system in any new or existing detached one-or two-family residential dwelling unit with two exceptions. The bill would not apply to new homes that require variance for access to road or non-residential agricultural and aquacultural buildings located outside the urban area.

GCA understands the necessity of protection and safety in homes. However, GCA is opposed to mandates that would present a significant cost burden to homebuilders and homeowners alike. Instead, GCA encourages incentives that would encourage homebuilders and homeowners to install fire safety measures that would reduce the likelihood of fire hazards. This bill addresses such mandates being considered in building codes.

GCA is opposed to the mandated installation of automatic sprinklers in residential homes for the following reasons: (1) cost burden to homeowners is significant; (2) new homes are built safer; (3) newer technologies to address fire hazards may be available in near future, negating installation of fire sprinklers; and (4) incentives are encouraged, rather than mandates. Further,

DATE RECEIVED

no data exists that suggests that the installation or retrofitting of automatic sprinklers will significantly improve the fire safety of homes.

GCA is in support of S.B. 2397, SD1, HD1 and would respectfully request that this Committee pass this measure.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



HAWAII FIRE FIGHTERS ASSOCIATION

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LATE TESTIMONY

House of Representatives
The Twenty-Sixth Legislature
Regular Session of 2012
Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs
March 21, 2012

Testimony by
Hawaii Fire Fighters Association

S.B. No. 2397, S.D. 1, H.D. 1 Relating to Fire Sprinklers

My name is Robert H. Lee and I am the President of the Hawaii Fire Fighters Association, Local 1463, IAFF, AFL-CIO. HFFA represents the 2,800 active and retired professional fire fighters throughout the State. HFFA opposes S.B. No. 2397, S.D. 1, H.D. 1, which would prohibit the counties from requiring the installation or retrofitting automatic fire sprinklers in new or existing one- or two-family dwellings.

HFFA supports the installation of residential fire sprinklers for the safety of our community, residents, visitors and the fire fighters on the front line. The U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) position is that "[A]ll homes should be equipped with both smoke alarms and automatic fire sprinklers, and all families should have and practice an emergency escape plan." As reported by USFA, the fire-related statistics for 2010 are staggering:

362,100	Residential building fires
2,555	Civilian fire deaths
13,275	Civilian fire injuries
\$6.6 Billion	Property damages

Last session, H.R. No.47, H.D. 1, was adopted and directed "the State Building Code Council is requested to adopt the requirement that automatic fire sprinklers be installed when construction one- and two-family dwellings, in compliance with the latest editions of the national-recognized safety codes." The State Building Code Council is to submit its findings and recommendations to the Legislature no later than 20 days before the convening of the Regular Session of 2015.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition of S.B. No. 2397, S.D. 1, H.D. 1. We urge the Committee to hold the bill to provide for the State Building Code Council to thoroughly discuss this issue with the stakeholders and provide their report to the Legislature in 2015.