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"Building Better Communities"

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Testimony to the House Committee on Public Safety Thursday, January 31, 2013 9:00 a.m. State Capitol - Conference Room 309

RE: HOUSE BILL 369, RELATING TO FIRE SAFETY

Dear Chair Aquino, Vice-Chair Ing, and members of the committee:

My name is Gladys Marrone, Director of Government Relations for the Building Industry Association of Hawaii (BIA-Hawaii), the voice of the construction industry. We promote our members through advocacy and education, and provide community outreach programs to enhance the quality of life for the people of Hawaii. BIA-Hawaii is a not-for-profit professional trade organization chartered in 1955, affiliated with the National Association of Home Builders.

BIA-Hawaii **opposes** H.B. 369, Relating to Fire Safety, which proposes to establish a residential kitchen fire task force to develop plans to address the dangers of residential kitchen fires. Its report is due to the 2014 legislature.

This bill is redundant and unnecessary. A fire sprinkler committee, tasked to address residential fire sprinklers, already exists, pursuant to H.R. 47 (2011). The first paragraph of the preamble of H.B. 369 refers to "installation of fire suppression systems," which would only be needed after a fire starts. Therefore, it would seem appropriate that the existing fire sprinkler committee is able to address this issue, if necessary, especially since their report is not due to the legislature until 2015.

We find it odd that, while H.B. 369 refers to kitchen safety, it makes no reference to preventative measures or education of the public in preventing kitchen fires. While nothing is foolproof, the best way to deal with kitchen fires is to prevent them from happening. One suggestion is to engage the public in kitchen fire prevention education. The Honolulu Fire Department, for example, could include such information on their website under Safety Information and Tips. Many municipalities have produced educational flyers and even videos for public distribution. One national insurance company includes on its website under Kitchen Fire Safety: kitchen fire safety must-haves, how to cook at home safely, and what to do if a cooking fire starts.

The BIA-Hawaii appreciates being included to participate in this task force. However, we respectfully **oppose** the passage of H.B. 369 because education is the best preventative measure, and an existing, and appropriate, committee is already in place should the need arise to address this issue.

Thank you for the opportunity to express our views on this matter.