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January 29, 2016

The Honorable Mark Hashem, Chair
Committee on Housing
House of Representatives
State Capitol, Room 326
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Hashem:

Subject: H.B. 2243 Relating to Fire Sprinklers

I am Manuel P. Neves, Chair of the State Fire Council (SFC) and Fire Chief of the Honolulu Fire Department (HFD). The SFC and the HFD strongly opposes H.B. 2243, which proposes to remove the sunset date of Act 83, Session Laws of Hawaii, 2012. Act 83 finds that prohibiting counties from adopting measures that may improve and enhance the ability of residents to protect themselves and their property from fire does not serve the best interests of public health and safety.

In Hawaii each respective county faces unique challenges relating to fire protection to include population density, proximity to structures, access, water supply, and limited fire response resources. Removing the sunset prohibits individual county authority or "home rule" as the appropriate application of building requirements based on occupant health and safety.

Despite improvements made in building construction, design, and materials, volatility and toxicity of today's synthetic furnishings allows untenable conditions to be reached more rapidly. As a result, California, Maryland and the District of

The Honorable Mark Hashem, Chair
Committee on Housing
January 29, 2016

Columbia require residential fire sprinklers; and seventeen states with no statewide requirement, allow local jurisdictions to require fire sprinklers.

Statistics, both in Hawaii and nationally, reveal that the highest death rates in fires occur in single-family residences. National model residential building codes require sprinklers to be installed in new one- and two-family dwellings. These fire sprinkler systems can increase survivability by eighty percent and reduce property damage significantly.

Home buyers depend on industry professionals, regulators, inspectors, developers, and manufacturers to provide their insight on safe construction standards for environmental, electrical, plumbing and other essential features in their home. It is a fundamental function of building codes to ensure that new homes being built are safe. Statistics have proven that fire sprinklers save lives.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and should you have any questions, please call SFC Administrator Socrates Bratakos at 723-7105.

Sincerely,



MANUEL P. NEVES
Chair

MPN/LR:clc

William P. Kenoi
Mayor



Darren J. Rosario
Fire Chief

Renwick J. Victorino
Deputy Fire Chief

County of Hawai'i
HAWAI'I FIRE DEPARTMENT
25 Aupuni Street • Suite 2501 • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720
(808) 932-2900 • Fax (808) 932-2928

January 29, 2016

The Honorable Mark Hashem, Chair
Committee on Housing
House of Representatives
State Capitol, Room 326
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Chair Hashem

Subject: H.B. 2243 Relating to Fire Sprinklers

I am Darren J. Rosario, Member of the State Fire Council (SFC) and Fire Chief of the Hawai'i Fire Department of the County of Hawai'i (HCFD). The SFC and the HCFD strongly opposes H.B. 2243, which proposes to remove the sunset date of Act 83, Session Laws of Hawai'i, 2012. Act 83 prohibits the counties from requiring residential fire sprinklers in one-and two-family dwellings, except to meet firefighting road access or water supply requirements.

In Hawai'i County itself, we face unique challenges relating to fire protection to include access, water supply, and limited fire response resources. Removing the sunset prohibits individual county authority or "home rule" as the appropriate application of building requirements based on occupant health and safety. California, Maryland and the District of Columbia require residential fire sprinklers and seventeen states with no statewide requirement, allow local jurisdictions to require fire sprinklers.

Fire survivability increases by eighty percent and property damage is reduced exponentially in single-family residences, which nationally and in Hawai'i has the highest death rates of any occupancy. Although improvements have been made in building construction, design and materials, the volatility and toxicity of today's synthetic furnishings allows untenable conditions to be reached more rapidly. It is for this reason that both national model residential building codes require sprinklers in new one- and two-family dwellings.



The Honorable Mark Hashem, Chair

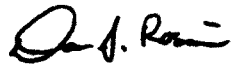
Page 2

January 29, 2016

It is a fundamental function of building codes to ensure safe housing. Home buyers don't get to choose whether their homes are built to withstand seismic or wind forces, safe electrical or plumbing systems. Fire sprinklers are no different.

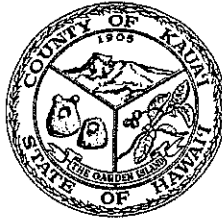
Thank you for the opportunity to testify and should you have any questions, please call me at 932-2901.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. J. Rosario".

DARREN J. ROSARIO
Fire Chief

Bernard P. Carvalho, Jr.
Mayor



Robert F. Westerman
Fire Chief

Nadine K. Nakamura
Managing Director



KAUA'I FIRE DEPARTMENT
County of Kaua'i, State of Hawai'i
4444 Rice Street, Suite 315, Lihue, Hawai'i 96766
TEL (808) 241-4980 FAX (808) 241-6508

February 1, 2016

The Honorable Mark Hashem, Chair
Committee on Housing
House of Representatives
State Capitol, Room 326
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Hashem

Subject: H.B. 2243 Relating to Fire Sprinklers

I am Robert F. Westerman, Vice Chair of the Hawaii State Fire Council and Fire Chief of the Kauai Fire Department (KFD). The SFC and the KFD strongly opposes H.B. 2243, which proposes to remove the sunset date of Act 83, Session Laws of Hawaii, 2012. Act 83 prohibits the counties from requiring residential fire sprinklers in one-and two-family dwellings, except to meet firefighting road access or water supply requirements.

In Hawaii each respective county face unique challenges relating to fire protection to include population density, proximity to structures, access, water supply, and limited fire response resources. Removing the sunset prohibits individual county authority or "home rule" as the appropriate application of building requirements based on occupant health and safety. California, Maryland and the District of Columbia require residential fire sprinklers and seventeen states with no statewide requirement, allow local jurisdictions to require fire sprinklers.

Both national model residential building codes require sprinklers in new one- and two-family dwellings. Fire survivability increases by eighty percent and property damage is reduced exponentially in single-family residences, which nationally and in Hawaii has the highest death rates of any occupancy. Although improvements have been made in building construction, design and materials, the volatility and toxicity of today's synthetic furnishings allows untenable conditions to be reached more rapidly.

It is a fundamental function of building codes to ensure safe housing. Home buyers don't get to choose whether their homes are built to withstand seismic or wind forces, safe electrical or plumbing systems. Fire sprinklers are no different.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and should you have any questions, please call SFC Administrator Socrates Bratakos at 723-7105.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Westerman', with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Robert F. Westerman
Vice Chair

RFW/dag

BIA-HAWAII

BUILDING INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

THE VOICE OF THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

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Testimony to the House Committee on Housing Monday, February 1, 2016 8:30 a.m. State Capitol - Conference Room 329

RE: H.B. 2243, RELATING TO FIRE SPRINKLERS

Dear Chair Hashem, Vice-Chair Jordan, and members of the Committee:

My name is Gladys Marrone, Chief Executive Officer 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, and affiliated with the National Association of Home Builders.

BIA-Hawaii **strongly supports**, H.B. 2243, making permanent Act 83, SLH 2012, which prohibits the counties from requiring the installation or retrofitting of automatic fire sprinklers or automatic fire sprinkler systems in new and existing detached one- or two-family dwelling units in residential structures and non-residential agricultural and aquacultural structures outside an urban area, with an exception for certain new homes.

In 2013, the State Building Code Council's Investigative Committee on Fire Sprinkler Implementation in New One- and Two-Family Dwellings documented the costs related to installing a sprinkler system in a new home: Hawaii County - \$19,618 to \$25,580; Maui County - \$17,298 to \$29,748; Honolulu County - \$18,092 to \$23,245; and Kauai County - \$24,253 to \$42,230. The National Fire Protection Association stated that the fire survival rate in homes with working smoke detectors is 99.41%, and only rises to 99.6% with a sprinkler.

We are in a Statewide housing crisis, with record-setting median prices at \$700,000 and the need for 66,000 new homes Statewide (DBEDT) over the next ten years. Given the significant added cost of a fire sprinkler, and marginal improvement in saving lives, we urge this legislative body to keep this an option for homeowners.

Working smoke alarms are proven to save lives. National organizations such as the American Red Cross and the Centers for Disease Control emphasize the importance of having a working smoke alarm and a family escape plan to help save lives in a house fire.

New homes are required to have hard-wired smoke alarms; when one smoke alarm is triggered, the entire system is activated, alerting the entire home to a fire. They are also built better with more fire-retardant materials such as double-pane windows and drywall.

To date, thirty states removed the sprinkler standard from their building codes or legislatively prohibited a mandate at either the state or local levels. In 2012, when Act 83 passed, only Maryland and California required sprinklers in new homes. Since then, only the District of Columbia has passed a similar requirement.

Finally, if we really want to save lives, then this Committee should instead consider mandating the retrofiting of older homes with fire sprinklers, because they are the ones that have been burning. In sorting data obtained from our Honolulu Fire Department, between January 2009 and May 2015, there were 583 reported structure fires. 447 of them occurred in homes built in 1980 or earlier, with the oldest home built in 1901.

BIA-Hawaii is not against fire sprinklers, just against the mandating of them. Current building code requirements, technology, and fire-retardant building materials have made homes safer than they have ever been, as illustrated by the decrease in fire and fire deaths nationwide (between 2002-2012, 19.5% decrease in fires and 20.5% decrease in fire deaths: U.S. Fire Administration). This bill would keep residential fire sprinklers optional for the homeowner, while having existing standards available for the homeowner who wishes to install a sprinkler system.

We appreciate the opportunity to express our **strong support** for H.B. 2243.

Testimony to the House Committee on Housing
Monday, February 1, 2016

8:30 a.m.

State Capitol - Conference Room 329

RE: H.B. 2243, RELATING TO FIRE SPRINKLERS

Dear Chair Hashem, Vice-Chair Jordan, and members of the Committee:

My name is Evan Fujimoto, President of Graham Builders, a design-build general contractor specializing in new homes and renovations on O'ahu. We've been in business for over 25 years and have faced many challenges from economic downturns to high interest rates to an excruciatingly slow permit process, just to name a few. Complying with Government over-regulation has always been an arduous and costly affair, and efforts to mandate fire sprinklers in all new homes is an example of a regulation that, despite its noble purpose of saving lives, would have the unintended consequence of bringing our industry to its knees.

I am also the current president-elect for BIA-Hawaii. We **strongly support** H.B. 2243, making permanent Act 83, SLH 2012, which prohibits the counties from requiring the installation or retrofitting of automatic fire sprinklers or automatic fire sprinkler systems in new and existing detached one-or two-family dwelling units in residential structures and non-residential agricultural and aquacultural structures outside an urban area, with an exception for certain new homes.

In 2013, the State Building Code Council's Investigative Committee on Fire Sprinkler Implementation in New One- and Two-Family Dwellings documented the costs related to installing a sprinkler system in a new home: Hawaii County - \$19,618 to \$25,580; Maui County - \$17,298 to \$29,748; Honolulu County - \$18,092 to \$23,245; and Kauai County - \$24,253 to \$42,230. The National Fire Protection Association stated that the fire survival rate in homes with working smoke detectors is 99.41%, and only rises to 99.6% with a sprinkler.

These added costs to construct a new home are **budget busters**. Few can afford to install these systems, which is why many of my friends who are HFD Firefighters don't have them in their own homes. As individuals, we believe we can make informed decisions about what we feel is necessary to ensure our personal safety in our own homes.

I appreciate the opportunity to express our **strong support** for H.B. 2243.

Sincerely,


Evan Fujimoto
President



Building your
Home for Life





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Kailua, HI 96734
Ph. (808) 263-4900
Fax (808) 263-5966
www.ccs-hawaii.com

January 30, 2016

**Testimony to the House Committee on Housing
Monday, February 1, 2016
8:30 a.m.
State Capitol - Conference Room 329**

RE: H.B. 2243, Relating to Fire Sprinklers

Dear Chair Hashem, Vice-Chair Jordan, and members of the Committee,

I am Greg Thielen, President and RME of Complete Construction Services. I am a Small Business Owner and have over 25 years' experience in the Construction Industry. I am also a Past President of BIA Hawaii and serve as the National Area Chair for Hawaii and California for the National Association of Home Builders.

I strongly **SUPPORT** House Bill 2243 making permanent Act 83, LSH 2012, which prohibits the counties from requiring the installation or retrofitting of automatic fire sprinklers in most new and existing detached one or two family dwelling units.

Fire Sprinklers are marginally useful. According to the National Fire Protection Association the fire survival rate in homes with working smoke detectors is 99.41% and only rises to 99.6% with a sprinkler. They are very expensive. According to the Hawaii State Building Code Council the cost per home ranges from \$18,902.00 to \$42,230.00. Most importantly anyone that wants a sprinkler system can get one as they are readily available. Despite the fact that they are available I have never installed a single system in any home I've ever built or remodeled in my 25 plus years of experience.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Sincerely,

Greg Thielen
President/RME

LATE



Chamber of Commerce HAWAII
The Voice of Business

**Testimony to the House Committee on Housing
Monday, February 1, 2016 at 8:30 A.M.
Conference Room 329, State Capitol**

RE: HOUSE BILL 2243 RELATING TO FIRE SPRINKLERS

Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Jordon, and Members of the Committee:

The Chamber of Commerce Hawaii ("The Chamber") strongly supports, HB 2243, making permanent Act 83, SLH 2012, which prohibits the counties from requiring the installation or retrofitting of automatic fire sprinklers or automatic fire sprinkler systems in new and existing detached one-or two-family dwelling units in residential structures and non-residential agricultural and aqua-cultural structures outside an urban area, with an exception for certain new homes.

The Chamber is Hawaii's leading statewide business advocacy organization, representing about 1,000 businesses. Approximately 80% of our members are small businesses with less than 20 employees. As the "Voice of Business" in Hawaii, the organization works on behalf of members and the entire business community to improve the state's economic climate and to foster positive action on issues of common concern.

In 2013, the State Building Code Council's Investigative Committee on Fire Sprinkler Implementation in New One- and Two-Family Dwellings documented the costs related to installing a sprinkler system in a new home: Hawaii County - \$19,618 to \$25,580; Maui County - \$17,298 to \$29,748; Honolulu County - \$18,092 to \$23,245; and Kauai County - \$24,253 to \$42,230. The National Fire Protection Association stated that the fire survival rate in homes with working smoke detectors is 99.41%, and only rises to 99.6% with a sprinkler.

We are in a Statewide housing crisis, with record-setting median prices at \$700,000 and the need for 66,000 new homes Statewide (DBEDT) over the next ten years. Given the significant added cost of a fire sprinkler, and marginal improvement in saving lives, we urge this legislative body to keep this an option for homeowners.

Working smoke alarms are proven to save lives. National organizations such as the American Red Cross and the Centers for Disease Control emphasize the importance of having a working smoke alarm and a family escape plan to help save lives in a house fire.

New homes are required to have hard-wired smoke alarms; when one smoke alarm is triggered, the entire system is activated, alerting the entire home to a fire. They are also built better with more fire-retardant materials such as double-pane windows and drywall.



Chamber of Commerce HAWAII

The Voice of Business

To date, thirty states removed the sprinkler standard from their building codes or legislatively prohibited a mandate at either the state or local levels. In 2012, when Act 83 passed, only Maryland and California required sprinklers in new homes. Since then, only the District of Columbia has passed a similar requirement.

Finally, if we really want to save lives, then this Committee should instead consider mandating the retrofitting of older homes with fire sprinklers, because they are the ones that have been burning. In sorting data obtained from our Honolulu Fire Department, between January 2009 and May 2015, there were 583 reported structure fires. 447 of them occurred in homes built in 1980 or earlier, with the oldest home built in 1901.

The Chamber is not against fire sprinklers, just against the mandating of them. Current building code requirements, technology, and fire-retardant building materials have made homes safer than they have ever been, as illustrated by the decrease in fire and fire deaths nationwide (between 2002-2012, 19.5% decrease in fires and 20.5% decrease in fire deaths: U.S. Fire Administration). This bill would keep residential fire sprinklers optional for the homeowner, while having existing standards available for the homeowner who wishes to install a sprinkler system.

We appreciate the opportunity to express our strong support for H.B. 2243.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



Lic. No. BC 8458

J W Inc. GENERAL CONTRACTOR

630 Laumaka St., Honolulu, HI 96819

Phone: (808) 841-5888 Fax: (808) 842-5941

E-mail: jwinc@hawaiiintel.net

**Testimony to the House Committee on Housing
Monday, February 1, 2016**

8:30 a.m.

State Capitol - Conference Room 329

RE: H.B. 2243, RELATING TO FIRE SPRINKLERS

Dear Chair Hashem, Vice-Chair Jordan, and members of the Committee:

My name is Michael Watanabe, Project Manager for JW, Inc. I am a member of BIA-Hawaii, the Voice of the Construction Industry. The BIA promotes 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, and affiliated with the National Association of Home Builders.

BIA-Hawaii **strongly supports**, H.B. 2243, making permanent Act 83, SLH 2012, which prohibits the counties from requiring the installation or retrofitting of automatic fire sprinklers or automatic fire sprinkler systems in new and existing detached one-or two-family dwelling units in residential structures and non-residential agricultural and aquacultural structures outside an urban area, with an exception for certain new homes.

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Member



BIA-HAWAII
BUILDING INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION



J W Inc. GENERAL CONTRACTOR

630 Laumaka St., Honolulu, HI 96819

Phone: (808) 841-5888 Fax: (808) 842-5941

E-mail: jwinc@hawaiiantel.net

Lic. No. BC 8458

BIA-Hawaii is not against fire sprinklers, just against the mandating of them. Current building code requirements, technology, and fire-retardant building materials have made homes safer than they have ever been, as illustrated by the decrease in fire and fire deaths nationwide (between 2002-2012, 19.5% decrease in fires and 20.5% decrease in fire deaths: U.S. Fire Administration). This bill would keep residential fire sprinklers optional for the homeowner, while having existing standards available for the homeowner who wishes to install a sprinkler system.

We appreciate the opportunity to express our **strong support** for H.B. 2243.

Member



BIA-HAWAII
BUILDING INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION