



TO: Representative Les Mason, Chairman  
and Members of the House Commerce, Labor and Economic Development

FROM: Martha Smith, Executive Director  
Kansas Manufactured Housing Association

DATE: February 19, 2018

RE: HB 2741 – Fire Sprinkler Industry Act

Chairman Mason and Members of the Committee, my name is Martha Smith and I am the Executive Director of the Kansas Manufactured Housing Association (KMHA). KMHA is a statewide trade association representing all facets of the manufactured and modular housing industries (manufacturers, retail centers, manufactured home community owners and operators, service and supplier companies, finance and insurance companies and transport companies) and I appreciate the opportunity to provide written testimony in opposition to HB 2741 – Fire Sprinkler Industry Act.

HB 2741 as written, will give the Office of State Fire Marshal broad new statutory and regulatory authority over residential construction. KMHA would note that this proposal is a major change in state policy regarding residential construction.

In New Section 20 of the bill, by striking lines 30-32 and lines 37-39 on page 16; and by striking lines 28-29 on page 17, the State Fire Marshal will be given the authority to mandate statewide installation of residential fire sprinklers.

The lack of affordable housing is a nationwide issue and the cost of residential fire sprinklers will add thousands of dollars to the price of a new home. Not only do residential fire sprinklers drive up the cost of housing but because of the potential to malfunction and cause property damage, it can increase homeowner's insurance premiums; consequently pricing thousands of Kansas families out of owning their own home. This policy could be implemented with little legislative input.

It appears that HB 2741 is the State Fire Marshal's second attempt to obtain sweeping new authority. This past August there was a similar proposal to expand the State Fire Marshal's authority by amending the agency's administrative rules and regulations. However, the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules and Regulations, expressed serious concerns and the proposed changes were withdrawn.

KMHA would respectfully ask the House Commerce, Labor and Economic Development Committee oppose HB 2741, and do not expand the State Fire Marshal's authority.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony.