

Testimony Regarding HB 2741
House Committee on Commerce, Labor and Economic Development
Doug Jorgensen, State Fire Marshal
February 19, 2018

I want to thank the committee for the opportunity to appear here today and present supportive and informational testimony on House Bill 2741. HB 2741 is a bill brought forward by members of the Kansas fire sprinkler industry. It would give the Office of the State Fire Marshal the responsibility of overseeing and regulating the installation of both commercial and residential sprinkler systems in the state. Our office is always in favor of the use of fire sprinkler systems in all commercial and residential settings. Fire sprinklers save lives of the occupants and responding emergency personnel plus reduce the amount of property loss.

If passed, our office would have to work quickly to hire staff and develop the rules and regulations for this new program by January 2019. Since the program is fee based the legislature would have to allocate additional spending authority from the Fire Marshal fee fund to allow our office to begin hiring the staff to implement the program. It would be our office's intent to seek advice and comment from the sprinkler industry, state fire service, city code administrators, and the local plumbing groups in preparing those rules and regulations. With the lengthy state process on adopting new rules and regulations, I do not believe we could have this task completed by January 2019.

Our office has also received concerns from local city administrators and the state fire service on how the bill is currently written. Postponing action on the bill until next year's session would give everyone involved time to share their concerns and ideas. Our office is in the process of establishing a 25 group/person advisory committee to assist our office in moving to the 2018 edition of building and fire life safety codes and regulations. There will be a member of the state commercial sprinkler industry, the state fire service, city code administrators, and the local plumbing, electrical, and mechanical groups on the committee. This bill would be the first thing the advisory committee would work on. With the actual implementation of this bill not scheduled to take place until January 2019, delaying the bill until next session would have very little effect on its time frame of implementation.