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Metropolitan Area Building and Construction Department

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To: Kansas House Committee on Commerce, Labor and Economic Development

Re: HB 2026, Fire Sprinkler Industry Act
(Oral and Written Testimony in Opposition)

From: Chris W. Labrum, Director, Metropolitan Area Building and Construction Department
E. C. Snow, Fire Chief, Wichita City Fire Department
Douglas J. Williams, Interim Fire Chief, Sedgwick County Fire District #1

The joint City of Wichita and Sedgwick County code enforcement agency, MABCD, The City of Wichita's Fire Department, and Sedgwick County Fire District #1 are in opposition of House Bill No. 2026, The Fire Sprinkler Industry Act. Proposed House Bill No. 2026 has the following significant concerns:

- Dual licensing: Local jurisdictions already require licensing for contractors.
- Scope of requirement: If the licensing requirement defines sprinkler systems consistent with the National Fire Protection Agency, this proposed bill will include underground fire-protection water supply lines from the water main to the sprinkler riser, and will require an underground sub-contractor to be supervised by a sprinkler contractor during installation.
- Notification of license revocation: There are no provisions for informing local jurisdictions when a contractor's license is revoked.
- Confirmation of licensing: Local jurisdictions would be required to confirm the status of licenses and for a license holder to be on site while work is being accomplished. This would require local jurisdictions to dedicated significant, additional staffing hours to ensure compliance.
- Conflict with local regulation: Allowing those licensed through the act to install low voltage electrical lines in conjunction with sprinkler system installation would infringe on current home rule. (Section 13, page 11, lines 05-14)
- Authority/enforcement: Local jurisdiction currently has the authority to regulate and enforce locally adopted codes and ordinances. (Page 14, line 41)
- Loss of flexibility to contractors: Requiring direct supervision by a licensed person to be on the job site will impose additional financial burdens to contractors.

While we agree that effective licensing for sprinkler industry contractors is a worthy goal, The City of Wichita and Sedgwick County can and currently do enforce our own requirements. State-level requirements would provide more uniformity, but will restrict the flexibility to work with contractors and likely create significant issues at the local level. House Bill No 2026 attempts to improve a work product in the industry, but will result in significant financial impact for contractors and property owners. The bill has serious potential infringement on home rule for the City of Wichita and Sedgwick County, who already regulate these activities.