



Tuesday, February 12, 2019

Testimony to the House Committee on Commerce, Labor and Economic Development

Chairman Tarwater, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit NEUTRAL testimony on behalf of the Kansas Building Industry Association (KBIA) on HB 2026, the fire sprinkler industry act. KBIA is an affiliate of the National Association of Home Builders and with nine local home builder associations and more than 2,200 members across the State of Kansas.

For those members who served on this committee last year, you may recall that I testified in opposition to 2018 HB 2741, also entitled the fire sprinkler industry act. At that time I voiced significant concerns about the bill. Much of that opposition centered around the creation of a new statewide regulatory framework that created default residential codes and gave the Office of the State Fire Marshal broad new authority including oversight of residential housing. This would have been a major change in state policy.

Following the hearing on HB 2741 last February Rep. Stan Frownfelter and Rep. Tory Marie Arnberger invited me to meet with them and other proponents of the bill. At this meeting we discussed my concerns and they agreed to amend the bill to limit the impact on residential housing. While HB 2741 was not worked in committee during the 2018 session, this year's version, HB 2026, removes the language that concerned us most, and specifically notes in several places that residential buildings do not include one and two family dwellings.

Overall I am not commenting on whether the State of Kansas needs to adopt a statewide fire sprinkler industry act. I will leave that decision to the wisdom of the committee. However, given my opposition to a very different version of this bill last year I felt it necessary to let the committee know that the proponents worked in good faith to address my concerns. As a result of their efforts I am neutral on HB 2026.

Thank you for the opportunity to address the committee.

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