



National Fire Protection Association

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November 1, 2005

The Honorable John B. Larson
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Larson:

On behalf of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), I would like to thank you for introducing the Nursing Home Fire Safety Act of 2005 and I wish to express NFPA's full support for the bill. Fire Sprinklers are a crucial life safety measure, especially for the residents of skilled nursing homes; recognizing this, NFPA has recently required fire sprinklers in all nursing homes in two of its key safety codes. The sprinkler provisions apply to the 2006 edition of the NFPA Life Safety Code and the NFPA Building Code. Your legislation will increase the safety of those most vulnerable to fire.

The evidence shows us that automatic fire sprinkler systems save lives. NFPA statistics show no record of a multiple death fire in a nursing facility equipped with an operational fire sprinkler system. A recent NFPA report, "U.S. Experience with Sprinklers and Other Fire Extinguishing Equipment" find sprinklers to be even more reliable than previously estimated in reducing U.S. fire deaths. Tragically, in 2003, sixteen residents of a nursing home in Hartford lost their lives and in a similar tragedy in Nashville, fifteen patients' lives were claimed, in facilities with no fire sprinkler systems.

The Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) estimates that 25% of all nursing homes do not have fire sprinkler systems. Your legislation provides the financial program needed to assist skilled nursing facilities to install life saving automatic fire sprinkler systems.

Again, thank you for introducing this important and life saving legislation. We look forward to working with you to win its passage.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Biechman", written over a horizontal line.

John C. Biechman
Vice President
Government Affairs