

SCR153

REQUESTING THE INSTALLATION OF AUTOMATIC SPRINKLERS OR APPLICATION OF CERTIFIED FIRE-RETARDANT COATINGS IN NEWLY CONSTRUCTED ONE- AND TWO-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DWELLINGS TO BE REQUIRED UNDER THE STATE BUILDING CODE.

Fire Sprinklers; Fire-Retardant Coating; Residential Dwellings



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

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April 4, 2011

The Honorable Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair
Committee on Water, Land, and Housing
The State Senate
State Capitol, Room 202
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

The Honorable Will Espero, Chair
Committee on Public Safety, Government
Operations, and Military Affairs
The State Senate
State Capitol, Room 231
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chairs Dela Cruz and Espero:

Subject: S.C.R. 153/S.R. 93 Requesting the Installation of Automatic Sprinklers or
Application of Certified Fire-Retardant Coatings in Newly Constructed One-
and Two-Family Residential Dwellings to be Required Under the State Building
Code

I am Kenneth G. Silva, Chair of the State Fire Council (SFC) and Fire Chief of the
Honolulu Fire Department (HFD). The SFC and the HFD strongly oppose S.C.R. 153/
S.R. 93 and offer the following comments:

1. Home fire sprinkler systems reduce heat, flames, and smoke from a fire, thus giving residents valuable time to escape. The risk of dying decreases by 80% when sprinklers are present. Installing home fire sprinklers significantly reduces property loss in the event of a fire and homeowner insurance premiums and supports local fire service efforts. By requiring these life-saving devices in new homes, residents can enjoy the same level of safety found in offices, schools, apartments, and public buildings.

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2. A properly applied and maintained fire-retardant coating is designed to passively contain the rate of fire spread; however, the combustible contents of a room will be the fuel that burns and causes the fire to spread and create hazardous conditions. There is a great deal of information regarding the reduction of fire deaths, injuries, and property losses due to properly operating automatic fire sprinklers.
3. Since interior walls of one- and two-family dwellings are constructed with masonry or gypsum board, which are noncombustible, we believe that applying a fire-retardant coating to these surfaces would not be that much more effective, as fires burn the combustible contents in structures.
4. The 2009 edition of the International Residential Code, which the State Building Code Council is reviewing for adoption, requires automatic fire sprinklers in new one- and two-family dwellings. No such requirement exists for fire-retardant coatings in new one- and two-family dwellings.

The SFC and the HFD urge your committees' deferral on the passage of S.C.R. 153/ S.R. 93 or the removal of any reference to automatic fire sprinklers in this resolution.

Should you have any questions, please call SFC Administrator Socrates Bratakos at 723-7151.

Sincerely,



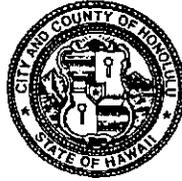
KENNETH G. SILVA
Chair

KGS/LR:cn

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND PERMITTING
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DIRECTOR

JIRO A. SUMADA
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

April 7, 2011

The Honorable Will Espero, Chair
and Members of the Committee on Public Safety,
Government Operations, and Military Affairs
The Honorable Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
and Members of the Committee on Water,
Land, and Housing
State Senate
State Capitol
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chairs Espero, Dela Cruz, and Members:

**Subject: Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 153 and
Senate Resolution No. 93
Requesting the Installation of Automatic Sprinklers or
Application of Certified Fire-Retardant Coatings in Newly
Constructed One- and Two-Family Residential Dwellings to be
Required Under the State Building Code**

The Department of Planning and Permitting is **strongly opposed** to Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 153 and Senate Resolution No. 93. As written, these resolutions imply that the application of fire-retardant coatings will provide the equivalent to the life-safety protection of an automatic fire sprinkler system. This is not the case.

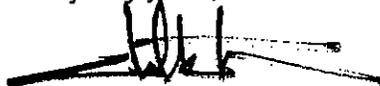
The building code would require an automatic fire sprinkler for a single family dwelling regardless which materials are used for construction of the structures. Building safety is independent of the type of materials used for construction when the dwellings are constructed in accordance to the building code.

To imply that the application of a fire-retardant coating or constructing a building out of noncombustible materials can be used in lieu of installation of fire sprinklers is dangerous as these systems are designed independently from the materials used for the construction of the buildings. The bottom line is that the type of materials and finishes used in construction is not a substitution for an automatic fire sprinkler system.

The Honorable Will Espero, Chair
and Members of the Committee on Public Safety,
Government Operations, and Military Affairs
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State Senate
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Please defer the passage of these resolutions as they are not in the best interest
of the life-safety. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Tanoue', is written over a horizontal line.

David K. Tanoue, Director
Department of Planning and Permitting

DKT: jmf
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