

January 8, 2019

Gerard Hathaway, R.A.
Assistant Director for Code Development
New York State Department of State Division of Administration and Enforcement
99 Washington Avenue
Albany, NY 12231-0001

Dear Mr. Hathaway:

On behalf of the New York State Association of REALTORS® (NYSAR), a not-for-profit trade organization representing over 57,000 of New York State's licensed real estate professionals, I write regarding the proposed 2019 amendments to the State Uniform Code being considered by the New York State Fire Prevention and Building Code Council.

REALTORS® recognize the importance of updating New York State's Uniform and Energy Codes and the work that goes into drafting and considering amendments. We believe it is also important to ensure that any adopted final version of these codes is not overly restrictive or burdensome on New York resident home buyers and home sellers.

Specifically, REALTORS® support the draft version of the proposed 2019 amendments to the State Uniform Code, IRC Section R313, which maintains the status quo regarding the installation of automatic fire sprinkler systems. We believe the installation of automatic fire sprinkler systems in homes under three stories should remain the decision of the owner, particularly due to the significant cost increase associated with the installation, materials, maintenance and alarm system required.

We also remain concerned about the impact of a more restrictive residential fire sprinkler mandate would have on rural housing. Homes being constructed that are not connected to a municipal water source would require additional equipment installed for a sprinkler system to function properly. This includes but is not limited to purchase and installation of a pump to provide the necessary water pressure to the sprinkler system, additional pipe and a water storage tank to provide the necessary volume of water.

Local municipalities are currently able to adopt more restrictive local laws for consideration by the Code Council if, after review of existing local factors including administration costs, water source and supply, farming, access and other practical considerations they deem appropriate. Additionally, consumers are free to install fire sprinklers at any time if they so desire based on their economic resources and home construction design.

To that end, Chapter 201 of the laws of 2014 also requires any builder who is contracting to construct a one- or two-family residence, under three stories in height, to provide the buyer with information prepared by the Office of Fire Prevention and Control regarding the installation of fire sprinklers prior to entering into a contract for construction of such dwelling. Providing information regarding the benefits of fire sprinkler systems while explicitly lining out what it will cost homebuyers is a transparent and common-sense approach that respects consumer choice.

Moses Seuram
President

Jennifer Stevenson
President-Elect

David Legaz
Secretary/Treasurer

Duncan R. MacKenzie
Chief Executive Officer

For these reasons, the New York State Association of REALTORS® supports the recommendation to maintain the status quo regarding automatic fire sprinklers in one- and two-family homes under three stories as currently proposed.

Sincerely,



Moses Seuram
NYSAR President