

Resolution No. 4

Date: September 15, 2006

City: Salt Lake City, Utah

NAHB Resolution

Title: Low Cost Fire Sprinklers
Original Sponsor: Anchorage Home Builders Association and the Alaska State Home Building Association

WHEREAS, the National Association of Home Builders supports an affirmative program of fire safety for residential construction whose principle components are life safety improvements and cost-effectiveness;

WHEREAS, a National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) analysis of fire data for 1999-2001 found that 76 percent of the fire deaths in one- and two-family dwellings occurred in homes without a working smoke alarm, and a more recent U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) analysis of fire data for 2001-2004 reported that only 12 percent of the one- and two-family dwellings with fatal fires had operational alarms;

WHEREAS, such data demonstrate the cost-effectiveness and continued need for the installation and proper maintenance of smoke alarms in all new and existing housing;

WHEREAS, residential fire sprinkler systems constructed in accordance with current industry standards, such as NFPA 13D and 13R, are significantly more expensive to install and maintain and not as cost-effective in improving the life safety of the occupants of multifamily low-rise and single-family residential construction as smoke alarms;

WHEREAS, home buyers, when given the option, overwhelmingly choose not to install fire sprinklers in the new homes they purchase due to the high cost of installation and maintenance, providing adequate water supply and other issues and concerns; and

WHEREAS, the 2006 International Residential Code (IRC) provides in Appendix P language that a jurisdiction can use to mandate sprinklers in dwellings scoped in the IRC, (one- and two-family dwellings and townhouses not more than three stories in height with their own means of egress),

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the National Association of Home Builders reaffirm its existing policy opposing mandating the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) sprinkler systems in dwellings scoped in the 2006 International Residential Code (IRC), (one- and two-family dwellings and townhouses not more than three stories in height with their own means of egress) because it has not been demonstrated that residential sprinkler systems can meet, at a minimum, the following conditions:

1. Significantly reduce the initial installation cost of the system versus current NFPA sprinkler systems,
2. Enhance the safety of occupants without a significant reduction in housing affordability,
3. Reduce the substantial costs associated with connecting to public water systems or providing water storage/delivery systems for homes not connected to public water,
4. Address freezing concerns and provide low-cost solutions for homes in colder climates,
5. Provide simplified design, installation and inspection requirements that significantly reduce the associated costs,
6. Minimize the maintenance of the installed system required of home owners,
7. Relieve builders of legal liability for malfunctions or failures, and
8. Address insurance industry rate increases, policy exceptions or policy denials for sprinkler system malfunctions or failures.

Board of Directors Action:

Joint Executive Board Action:

Resolutions Committee Action:

Construction Codes & Standards Committee Action:

Remodelers Council Board of Trustees Action:

Single Family Production Builders Committee Action:

Single Family Small Volume Builders Committee Action:

Multifamily Board of Trustees Action:

Approved

Recommends Approval

Recommends Approval

Recommends Approval

Recommends Approval

Recommends Approval

Recommends Approval

Recommends Approval