

Courier News

Date: April 16, 2010 Subject: Action Needed in Fire Sprinkler Regulation Circulation: 27,004

Action needed on fire-sprinkler mandate

When Gov. Chris Christie took office in January, one of his first actions was to issue a 90-day freeze on the majority of new regulations and to form the Red Tape Review Commission (RTRC). The purpose of the RTRC is to review the frozen regulations to determine if the regulations would have a negative impact on New Jersey.

While I applaud the governor for taking the necessary steps to make doing business in New Jersey less burdensome, an important life and public safety regulation was included in the 90-day freeze. The residential fire sprinkler requirement, included in the 2009 International Residential Code (IRC), states that all newly constructed one- and two-family homes and townhomes built after Jan. 1, 2012, in New Jersey, must contain a residential fire sprinkler system.

I am hopeful that the Christie administration will adopt this crucial life safety regulation — which has already been vetted by numerous code professionals and governmental agencies, including the Department of Community Affairs, over the past two years. When the state ran the proposal in the New Jersey Register asking for public comment, the citizens of this state made their voice heard in hopes of change, overwhelmingly

supporting the requirement of fire sprinklers in new homes.

This regulation will help protect New Jersey residents and its fire service professionals who risk their lives to save others. About 85 percent of all fires occur in the home, a place where people should feel the safest.

If this regulation is adopted, New Jersey has the opportunity to help save the lives of 166 residents, help prevent 972 civilians and 1,728 firefighters from being injured, and help reduce more than \$223 million of property damage in the state as a result of fires, per yearly averages compiled by the New Jersey Division of Fire Safety.

I sincerely hope that the Christie administration will take decisive action in approving the residential fire sprinkler regulation and continue to keep New Jersey in the forefront of fire safety.

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