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AUTOMATIC SPRINKLER ENGINEERS & CONTRACTORS

February 11, 2019

RE: House Bill 2026
Fire Sprinkler Act

Dear Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

My husband and I were born in Kansas and have lived in Kansas our entire lives. I have worked in the fire sprinkler industry for over 20 years with most of those years spent in System Design and Project Management. My husband has worked in the industry for 17 years, first as a Sprinkler Fitter and for the last 7 years as an Inspector. For the past 10 years we have both worked for Fire Protection Services, a Contractor in Wichita, Kansas. We are proud of being part of an industry that saves lives.

According to statistics from the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), between 2010 and 2014 the civilian death rate per 1000 fires was 87% lower, civilian injury rate was 27% lower and the fire fighter fireground injury rate was 67% lower from fires at properties with sprinklers than in properties without an automatic extinguishing system.

However, for fire sprinklers to be effective, they must operate properly. Fire sprinkler systems are very reliable and effective. As reported by the NFPA, between 2010 and 2014 when sprinklers were present, they operated properly and were effective in controlling the fire 88% of the time. In the 12% of cases where the sprinklers failed to operate or were ineffective the most common cause was that the system was shut off. But lack of maintenance, damaged system components, inappropriate system for type of fire and not enough water discharged were other issues found when sprinklers failed to control the fire.

This is why HB 2026 is so important. By insuring that all fire sprinkler contractors, installers and inspectors have a standard level of competency, we are placing a priority on insuring that all those involved in installing, maintaining and inspecting fire sprinkler systems have the knowledge base they need to provide fire sprinkler systems that protect the lives and property of our fellow Kansans.

From my experience, Kansas sprinkler contractors and the people they employ are conscientious and hard working. But without any state licensing requirements a company from another state can come into Kansas without currently having to meet any standards. In construction the low bid usually wins the contract and if the out of state contractor is planning on cutting corners and using unskilled labor it is hard for Kansas contractors to compete. Larger cities and counties generally have the resources and licensing requirements in place to guard against this, but much of the State does not. With HB 2026 all contractors working

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in Kansas would need to meet the same requirements and those working for them as installers or inspectors have the same standard of knowledge.

Please support HB 2026 to protect Kansas sprinkler contractors and allow them to compete on a level playing field. But more importantly, to protect the people of Kansas who rely on properly designed, installed and maintained fire sprinkler systems to protect their lives and property.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Christine Brunner".

Christine Brunner
Manager