



City of Ferndale Fire Rescue

Kevin P. Sullivan
Fire Chief

Brian E. Batten
Fire Marshal



September 17, 2013

To: All Fire Chiefs, Marshals and Inspectors

Senate Bill 235, a bill that will allow qualified Fire Code Officials (Inspectors) to register under Act 54 (Building Code Official Registration Act), was before the House of Representatives Committee on Regulatory Reform today.

Fire Marshal Paul Dove (Coldwater Fire Department & President of MFIS) and I testified on the merits of the bill and the certifications we as Fire Code Officials achieve. The testimony went well with the only person testifying today against the bill was Bureau of Construction Codes Director Irvin Poke. Although he stated he was neutral, he proceeded to attack the expertise of the fire inspector and the NFPA certifications we earn. Although we feel confident that the Legislators at the hearing will vote in favor of the bill, we will definitely need to lobby the rest of the Congressman and women, asking them to vote in favor of the bill.

Please call your Legislators as soon as you can. Ask them to support Senate Bill 235.

Talking points to key on are:

- This bill has already **passed the Senate unanimously.**
- The legislation if passed is **voluntary** – nothing mandates that the Fire Inspector be involved in the construction process.
 - **It allows our City, Village, Township or County to decide if they wish to use the expertise of the Fire Inspector** to review plans and inspect fire protection, detection and alarm systems.
 - If the Fire Inspector obtains all three NFPA or ICC certifications they can inspect and approve fire protection systems and fire alarm and detection systems
 - If the Fire Inspector obtains only Inspector I and Fire Plans Examiner certification they can only review plans for fire protection, detection and alarm systems.
- **The Building Official will always be the authority in the construction process.**
 - Like the Mechanical and Electrical Inspector we will be another expert for the Building Official.
 - We will report to the Building Inspector our findings.
 - **The Building Inspector remains the only person who can grant a certificate of occupancy.**
 - **Revenues** remain with the Building Department. **Permits** remain at the Building Department



City of Ferndale Fire Rescue

Kevin P. Sullivan
Fire Chief

Brian E. Batten
Fire Marshal



- Why is this bill important?
 - This bill is needed for a variety of reasons.
 - Cut backs in staffing levels have caused reductions in full time Mechanical and Electrical Inspectors.
 - Many communities have gone to contractual services using part time Mechanical and Electrical Inspectors.
 - The level of education, experience and expertise in fire suppression systems and fire detection and alarm systems is a challenge for many of these part time inspectors. As a result they rely on their Fire Inspector to conduct plan reviews, inspections and witness all the testing.
 - Many of us who work with our Building, Mechanical and Electrical Inspectors have done this for years. **A team approach.** But we legally cannot approve the work.
 - As a result, delays occur in the construction process.
 - In addition, contractors are sometimes required to redo tests because either the Mechanical/Electrical Inspector or us was not present.
 - Both delays and duplication of efforts cost time and money.
- The worst case scenario is if a Mechanical or Electrical Inspector who is not familiar with fire protection, detection and alarm systems, approves a project and after the Building Official issues a certificate of occupancy we come in to inspect the building and discover discrepancies. I am sure many of you have encountered this scenario and the building owner is extremely upset.
 - This cost time and money and should a fire occur, tragic losses of life and property
- **This bill will allow a community to develop a team approach of knowledgeable, experienced and certified inspectors that can review, inspect and approve items in their area of expertise.**
- **It will streamline the construction process**
- **It will provide confidence for the building owner, with no surprises or conflicts to overcome.**



City of Ferndale Fire Rescue

Kevin P. Sullivan
Fire Chief

Brian E. Batten
Fire Marshal



Facts on NFPA Certifications

- NFPA Fire Inspector I certification
 - 80 hours of classroom
 - 5 modules
 - Covers NFPA 1 Fire Prevention Code, NFPA 101 Life Safety Code, NFPA 13 Sprinkler System Installation, NFPA 25 Maintenance of water based systems, NFPA 72 Fire Alarm System installation and maintenance.
 - The course also covers PA 207 Fire Prevention Code, the Michigan Building Code and our role in each.
 - Ordinances adopted by local jurisdictions are also discussed
 - The course also discusses how codes and ordinances are adopted in the State of Michigan and at the local level. With emphasis that Michigan is a Mini-Maxi State.
 - There is a practicum requirement of the certification following the passage of a nationally recognized written test.
- NFPA Fire Plans Examiner certification
 - 40 hours of classroom instruction
 - Prepares the Inspector on how to perform a plan review using actual fire suppression, detection and alarm systems.
 - Instruction includes the use of other recognized standards in the building and fire codes such as those from Underwriters Laboratory, ASTM, FM, and more.
 - Codes used include those used in NFPA Inspector I with emphasis in NFPA 13 and 72.
 - There is a practicum requirement following the passage of a nationally recognized test.
- NFPA Fire Inspector II certification
 - 40 hours of classroom instruction
 - Greater detail into NFPA 13 and 72, as well as the addition of NFPA 30 and 58 dealing with flammable and combustible liquids and flammable gases.
 - There is a practicum requirement following the passage of a nationally recognized test.
- In all the Fire Inspector seeking recognition in Act 54 would have had 120 hours of classroom instruction, practical experience using the codes, working with a seasoned Fire Inspector, preparing reports on each inspection or plan review conducted, and the passage of three nationally recognized tests.
- This far exceeds the level of education and experience required of the Mechanical and Electrical Inspectors when dealing with fire protection, detection and alarm systems.



City of Ferndale Fire Rescue

Kevin P. Sullivan
Fire Chief

Brian E. Batten
Fire Marshal



In closing, the Michigan Fire Inspectors are asking that you call your Legislators as soon as possible and ask them to support Senate Bill 235.

Next week Tuesday, September 24th, 2013 the House Committee on Regulatory Reform will vote on the bill. We are hoping they will vote to move the bill out of committee at which point we are confident that the bill will be brought to the floor for a second reading. If there are no amendments or additional objections, they may move for a final reading of the bill at which time the House will vote on the bill.

Should the bill pass the House it is then sent to the Governor for consideration and his signature.

Again, call you Representative today and ask them to support Senate Bill 235.

Thanks,

Brian Batten, CFPS
Fire Marshal

MFIS Past President