

Date of Hearing: July 15, 2015

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Brian Maienschein, Chair

ACR 93 (Holden) – As Introduced June 30, 2015

**SUBJECT:** Fire safety: municipal ordinances.

**SUMMARY:** Encourages all California municipalities to reexamine regulations surrounding mandatory fire suppression ordinances. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Resolves that the Legislature encourages all California municipalities to reexamine regulations surrounding mandatory fire suppression ordinances, and makes a number of findings, including the following:
  - a) The first automatic sprinkler system was patented in England in 1723 and the first fire sprinkler system was developed in the United States in 1874;
  - b) Fire suppression technology was first used in residential construction in the state in 1932 when the Union Oil Company constructed homes for employees in Santa Paula, California;
  - c) The City of San Clemente, California was the first city in the nation to adopt an ordinance requiring all new residential dwellings to contain fire sprinklers;
  - d) Senate Bill 2579 was introduced in the California State Senate in 1986 and would have required fire sprinklers in all residential buildings;
  - e) In January 1988, the California State Fire Marshall published California's minimum design and installation standards for fire suppression systems;
  - f) On May 4, 1988, several floors of the First Interstate Tower, a downtown Los Angeles high-rise office tower built without fire sprinklers, ignited killing one and injuring 40 others. Subsequent reports indicated a working fire suppression system would have lessened the fire's damage;
  - g) Following the First Interstate Tower fire, the City of Los Angeles mandated automatic fire suppression systems in all buildings over seven stories;
  - h) Buildings should be provided with built-in fire suppression systems to offset the negative impact of excessive response times;
  - i) On April 7, 2015, a massive fire burned through a six-floor office building in Los Angeles, a building that was exempted from mandatory fire suppression regulations because of its age and size.

**FISCAL EFFECT:** None

**COMMENTS:**

- 1) **Bill Summary.** ACR 93 makes a number of findings and encourages all California municipalities to reexamine regulations surrounding mandatory fire suppression ordinances, and is an author-sponsored measure.
- 2) **Author's Statement.** According to the author, "For decades, California cities have led the nation in the development and deployment of fire suppression technology. The City of Santa Paula was the first city in America to feature new home developments with built-in fire sprinklers. The City of San Clemente was the first city in the nation to mandate fire sprinklers in all new construction. Since the 1980's, the City of Los Angeles has been a leader in deploying fire suppression technology in high-rise buildings. Following the First Interstate Bank Tower building fire in 1988, Los Angeles required all buildings over seven-stories to install fire sprinklers, regardless of the building's age.

"Numerous studies and state findings have shown that fire sprinklers significantly reduce the loss of life and property that stems from delayed response times inherent in firefighting. However, the state does not regulate fire suppression technology outside of school and buildings owned by the state. Existing law provides significant discretion to local governments to adopt ordinances related to fire suppression technology in buildings. According to the Los Angeles Times, over six thousand buildings are due for inspection by the Los Angeles Fire Department. More than half are large, high-occupancy buildings that are at risk of fire damage due to their age, size, approved use, and the quality of the internal fire suppression technology in place to prevent calamities. Recent fires, including a multi-alarm fire in an office building in Los Angeles, have highlighted the existing gap in fire suppression technology. Many older buildings have been "grandfathered" into existing building codes related to fire suppression, causing a gap in existing fire safety measures."

**REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:****Support**

California Fire Chiefs Association  
Fire Districts Association of California

**Opposition**

None on file

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