SENATE, No. 1805

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 24, 2020

Sponsored by:
Senator M. TERESA RUIZ
District 29 (Essex)

SYNOPSIS

Requires fire suppression systems in new single and two family homes.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.

AN ACT concerning new home fire safety and supplementing the "State Uniform Construction Code Act," P.L.1975, c.217 (C.52:27D-119 et seq.).

BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "New Home Fire Safety Act."

2. As used in this act:

"Commissioner" means the Commissioner of Community Affairs.

"Fire suppression system" means an engineered or pre-engineered system that suppresses a fire using an extinguishing agent distributed through fixed piping and nozzles that are activated either manually or automatically. The system may include containers, nozzles, controls, automatic detection, manual releases, equipment shut downs, and alarms. In such systems, an extinguishing agent is discharged through fixed pipes and nozzles into or over a potential fire hazard.

"Manufactured home" means a unit of housing manufactured in accordance with the standards promulgated for a manufactured home by the Secretary of the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development pursuant to the "National Manufactured Housing Construction and Safety Standards Act of 1974," Pub.L.93-383 (42 U.S.C. s. 5401 et seq.).

"New home" means a dwelling not previously occupied, for which a construction permit has been issued after the effective date of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill) and intended for residential use by not more than two households, but shall not mean a manufactured home or a dwelling that is not connected to a public water system, as defined by section 3 of P.L.1977, c.224 (C.58:12A-3), the “Safe Drinking Water Act.”

3. a. In any case where a change of occupancy of any building subject to the requirements of section 1 of P.L.1991, c.92 (C.52:27D-198.1) is subject to a municipal ordinance requiring the issuance of a certificate of occupancy, certificate of inspection, or other documentary certification of compliance with laws and regulations relating to safety, healthfulness, and upkeep of the premises, no such certificate shall be issued until the municipal officer or agency responsible for its issuance has received a certification from the enforcing agency that the new home is equipped with a fire suppression system that conforms to the requirements promulgated by the commissioner, pursuant to the State Uniform Construction Code and section 4 of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill).

b. The local governing body having jurisdiction over the enforcing agency or, where the Division of Codes and Standards is the enforcing agency, the commissioner, may establish a fee which covers the cost of inspection and of issuance of the certificate; however, if an inspection is being made and a certificate is being issued evidencing compliance with section 2 of P.L.1991, c.92 (C.52:27D-198.2), the fee authorized therein shall cover the costs of complying with this section.

4. The commissioner shall modify the building subcode of the State Uniform Construction Code to require the installation of fire suppression systems in all new one- and two family homes pursuant to P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill). The modification shall require all fire suppression systems to be in compliance with subchapter 10 of chapter 10 of Title 7 of the New Jersey Administrative Code regarding Physical Connections and Cross Connection Control by Containment, and shall require the installation of separate shut-off valves and a meter for measuring water usage dedicated to fire suppression.

5. This act shall take effect on the first day of the seventh month next following the date of enactment of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill) and shall not apply to new homes built as part of a development plan or building permit approved on or before the effective date of this act.

STATEMENT

This bill, entitled the "New Home Fire Safety Act," would require the installation of a fire suppression system in new single and two-family homes during the home's construction. The provisions of the bill would not apply to manufactured homes, or to any single and two-family homes that are not connected to public water systems. The bill would also provide that a certificate of occupancy may not be issued for a new home until the State or local code enforcement agency determines that the home is equipped with a fire suppression system that conforms to State Uniform Construction Code systems promulgated by the Commissioner of Community Affairs. Equipping new single and two-family homes with fire suppression systems will provide protection for the State's residents and firefighters.

Any modifications made by the Commissioner of Community Affairs to the State Uniform Construction Code must require all fire suppression systems to be in compliance with State administrative regulations regarding physical connections and cross connection control, mandate the installation of separate shut-off valves, and require a meter for measuring water usage dedicated to fire

suppression. The bill permits municipalities and the Commissioner of Community Affairs to each establish a fee that covers the cost of inspection and the issuance of a certificate of occupancy.

The requirements of this bill would apply to newly constructed single and two-family homes as of the first day of the seventh month after enactment. Accordingly, development plans and building permits approved prior to the bill's effective date would not be subject to the provisions of the bill.