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Contact Your Legislators Support HF792/SF578



**Ask your legislators to support housing affordability and pass
HF792/SF578!**

**Minnesota House of Representatives Expected To Act
On Expedited Sprinkler Rule Making Bill Soon**

State Senate To Act On The Bill After House Passage

Very soon Minnesota's Legislators are expected to act on BAM's number one initiative for this Legislative Session - - - a bill crafted to make twin homes a viable housing option once again and to clarify that the sprinkler mandate rule doesn't apply to one or two-family

dwelling.

Please take the time to contact your legislators to keep supporting HF792 (Theis, R-St. Cloud) / SF 578 (Draheim, R-Madison Lake).

- Thank them for their help moving the bills to through the committee process, and
- Ask them to support the bills on the House and Senate when it comes up for a vote on the floor.

You can find your legislator online at this link: [Who Represents Me?](#)

If you know who your legislator but need more details this searchable [excel document](#) will help you with their contact information.

Thank you & stay tuned for updates!

Background On The Bills

As introduced, HF792 / SF578 established uniformity between all construction codes by reverting the definition of townhome back to the standard adopted by the Minnesota Fire Code, the International Codes Council, and all of our surrounding states – that a town home consists of three or more attached dwelling units.

Through discussions with the Fire Service and Department of Labor and Industry (DLI), the bill was amended and now it is a refined and fully supported proposal designed to make sure one of the most affordable, desirable owner-occupied housing products are once again a viable option in Minnesota.

As amended, the bill is supported by homebuilders, the fire service, and DLI. We are not aware of any opposition.

- It provides expedited rule making authority to the Department of Labor and Industry to amend the existing sprinkler rule to conform with a Court of Appeals decision that invalidated portions of the sprinkler rule and to make clear that two-unit twin homes are not subject the mandate.
- It makes sure that twin homes still adhere to other construction details such as two one-hour rated fire protection wall systems and foundation-to-roof fire blocking remains intact.

There will be a non-controversial floor amendment in the House to remove a provision that would have permanently instruct the Commissioner to suspend enforcement of the sprinkler provision in twin homes. Based on our conversations with the Administration, this provision is no longer required to initiate suspension of the rule once the bill is signed by the Governor.

If you need a bit more detail on this policy initiative, please read the info below.

Under Minnesota's current residential building code, a town home is defined as two or more attached dwelling units – essentially capturing two-family town homes, often known as "twin-homes", under a

construction code provisions that may be more appropriately geared to commercial code provisions.

Consequences caused by including twin homes in the town home definition in the current code are:

I. Conflict between the fire code (3 units or more) and building code (2 units or more) resulting in confusion in the marketplace and between code enforcement agencies.

II. Imposition of building code provisions that resulted in:

- Twin homes being priced out of reach for Minnesotans by increasing the cost of twin homes by \$7,000 - \$15,000 (each side) to comply with the sprinkler mandate only
- A regulation that generated empirical evidence that showed it clearly drove the construction of twin homes across the border

III. A real life example comes from Moorhead, MN

- 46 twin home units were permitted and built prior to the effective date of the new code vs. 2 units permitted the month of the effective date of the new code and they were never built
- The loss of entry level housing having a long term economic impact on the city:
 - **Loss of new household formation = fewer young families in the community
 - **Loss of a good mix of owner-occupied housing

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