



TACIR

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on Intergovernmental Relations

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Commission Members

FROM:  Annisse Roehrich-Patrick
Executive Director

DATE: 19 November 2014

SUBJECT: Fire Sprinkler Requirements for Places of Worship, Protecting People and Property—Final Report

Prepared in response to a request by the 108th General Assembly's House Local Government Subcommittee to study House Bill 1649 by Representative Timothy Hill (Senate Bill 1749 by Nicely), the attached report does not recommend changing the state building code to create the exceptions proposed in the bill. The bill would have exempted single-story places of worship located in unincorporated areas of the state from laws and regulations requiring places of assembly to have fire protection sprinkler systems as long as they

- have a capacity of no more than 400 persons;
- do not have a water supply located on the property;
- have a minimum of two exits, plus one additional exit for every 2,500 square feet or portion thereof over 4,500 square feet;
- have a fire alarm system;
- have fixed seating for at least 250 persons; and
- were built on or after July 1, 2012.

Few states make similar exceptions because of the risk they pose to the health, safety, and welfare of the public, firefighters, and property, and because reasonable means are available to support sprinkler systems where public water supplies cannot.