

# HOUSE RESEARCH

## Bill Summary

**FILE NUMBER:** H.F. 336

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**Version:** As introduced

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**Subject:** Sprinklers in high-rise buildings

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### Overview

This bill would require that existing high-rise buildings be retrofitted with sprinklers, and would provide a state income tax deduction to owners for part of their retrofitting costs.

#### Section

- 1 Subtractions from federal taxable income.** Allows an individual owner of an existing building to subtract a percentage of the cost of sprinkler retrofitting from federal taxable income for the purpose of calculating state taxable income.
- 2 Corporations; modifications decreasing federal taxable income.** Allows a corporation owning an existing building to subtract a percentage of the cost of sprinkler retrofitting from federal taxable income for the purpose of calculating state taxable income.
- 3 Maintenance responsibilities.** Makes filing smoke detector inspection and maintenance reports with the local fire marshal mandatory for owners of apartment units, hotels, lodging houses, and other types of dwelling units which are not owner-occupied.
- 4 Fire safety sprinklers in existing high-rise buildings.**

**Subd. 1. Requirements.** Requires fire sprinklers to be installed in existing buildings in which at least one human-occupied story is over 75 feet above the lowest level of access by a fire department vehicle. Automatic sprinklers must be installed in areas where sprinklers would be required in a newly constructed building, and must meet the state building and fire code requirements.

**Subd. 2. Exemptions.** (a) Exempts telecommunications equipment meeting certain requirements.

## **Section**

(b) Exempts monuments and war memorials, airport control towers, open parking structures, agricultural buildings, and manufacturing facilities meeting certain OSHA requirements.

(c) Allows extensions if owners demonstrate appropriate effort and genuine inability to comply within deadlines.

(d) Authorizes the commissioner of public safety or the state fire marshal to vary time deadlines provided the spirit and intent of the law are observed and public safety ensured.

(e) Directs the commissioner to grant extensions for owners of publicly subsidized units when lack of funds precludes compliance with deadlines.

**Subd. 3. Reporting.** Requires owners to submit a statement of intention to comply and a schedule for compliance to the state fire marshal.

**Subd. 4. Transition.** (a) Requires water supplies for the sprinkler system be provided within three years, and provides a timetable for supplying the non-exempt portion of the building with sprinklers: 25 percent within three years, 50 percent within five years, 75 percent within seven years, and 100 percent within ten years.

(b) An owner of multiple buildings may comply by having the required percentage of buildings fitted with sprinklers rather than a percentage of units within each building.

(c) Owners of office buildings with leases extending more than six years beyond the effective date have an extra year for each phase of the compliance timetable.

(d) Outlines requirements for sprinkler contractors to keep standpipes and fire pumps operational, to make modifications after working hours when only one standpipe is present, and to provide signage.

**Subd. 5. Evacuation plans.** Requires owners of sprinklered buildings to file evacuation plans with the local fire chief.

**Subd. 6. Local assistance.** Directs the state fire marshal to assist owners and local officials with sprinkler retrofitting and evacuation plans.

**Subd. 7. Effect on other laws.** States that the bill does not supersede the state building or fire codes.

**Subd. 8. Housing budget priorities.** States that the bill does not affect the existing capital improvement budget priorities of public housing facilities.

**5 Working group.** Directs the commissioner of public safety to appoint a working group for advice on the implementation of the sprinkler requirements and on appeals, which shall expire June 31, 2013. Members include: state fire marshal's office, department of administration, state fire chiefs association, building owners and managers association, Minneapolis public housing authority, Minnesota multi housing association, hotel and motel associations, fire marshals association of Minnesota, professional engineers and architects, and the general public.