

MINUTES OF THE
MEETING OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE
ON HUMAN RESOURCES AND FACILITIES

SIXTY-FIRST SESSION
NEVADA STATE LEGISLATURE
February 25, 1981

The Senate Committee on Human Resources and Facilities was called to order by Chairman Joe Neal at 8:07 a.m., Wednesday, February 25, 1981, in Room 131 of the Legislative Building, Carson City, Nevada. Exhibit A is the Meeting Agenda. Exhibit B is the Attendance Roster.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Senator Joe Neal, Chairman
Senator James N. Kosinski, Vice Chairman
Senator Richard E. Blakemore
Senator Wilbur Faiss
Senator Virgil M. Getto
Senator James H. Bilbray

GUEST LEGISLATOR:

Senator William H. Hernstadt

STAFF MEMBER PRESENT:

Connis S. Richards, Secretary

SENATE BILL NUMBER 214

Senator Hernstadt said that Senate Bill No. 214 was introduced to save lives as well as the tourist industry in Nevada. He compared a fire in the Las Vegas Hilton in which 8 people died and two hundred people were injured to a fire set in the New York Hilton in which the sprinkling system was activated and the only damage was from the puddles of water that extinguished the fire. He noted that in the history of modern firefighting and modern construction techniques, buildings that have had sprinklers have had no more than 3 fatalities.

Mr. Roy Parrish, Fire Chief, Clark County Fire Department stated that he is a member of the Governor's Blue Ribbon Panel that was organized shortly after the Las Vegas' MGM fire to look into the fire codes as they currently exist

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in the State of Nevada. He said that the panel has found that the Nevada codes are the among the most stringent in the United States at this time. He added that the panel is charged with inspecting older buildings to determine what would be entailed in retrofitting them to bring them up to present codes. He said that in some cases this is almost entirely impossible, but other avenues of fire prevention are available in those cases.

Mr. Parrish said that Senate Bill No. 214 is too restrictive in its present form. He said that the definition of hotels in Nevada includes motels of one story. He said that it is not necessary to retrofit single story motels. He recommended that the committee not make a decision on Senate Bill No. 214 until the Governor's Blue Ribbon Panel's recommendations can be reviewed.

The Chairman asked Mr. Parrish if the MGM Hotel in Las Vegas did have some sprinkling systems when the fire broke out.

Mr. Parrish said that the hotel did have sprinkling systems in some areas. He said that those systems were effective in keeping the fire from entering the showrooms and shopping areas.

Mr. Tom Huddleston, State Fire Marshal agreed with Mr. Parrish that the wording in the bill should not be all inclusive for motels as well as hotels. He said that this could cause a real problem, in rural areas particularly.

Mr. Huddleston suggested that the committee review the Governor's Blue Ribbon Panel report before taking action on this bill.

Senator Kosinski asked Mr. Huddleston what the average cost would be to retrofit existing buildings.

Mr. Huddleston said that the cost could run from \$1.75 to \$3.00 or \$4.00 per square foot to retrofit existing buildings. He added that the total cost would be dependent on the age and condition of the structure.

Mr. Marty Richard, Fire Marshal, City of Reno expressed a concern over the definition of "hotel" as had Mr. Parrish and Mr. Huddleston. He said that it is too restrictive to

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pinpoint specific areas where sprinklers must be installed. He said that generally, the sprinklers should be throughout the building. Mr. Richard asked for greater clarification throughout the bill so that the intent is easily understood and complied with.

Mr. Don Young, Fire Chief, City of Sparks said that the people of the State of Nevada have an obligation to tourists who are drawn to the area because of the gaming industry. He said that this obligation is to have safe buildings in which these people can play and relax.

Mr. Young expressed a concern that revenues would be reduced to local governments. He said that this could make enforcement of additional fire codes difficult.

Mr. Young observed that buildings that stretch out horizontally are as difficult to protect from fire as are high rises. He added that the terminology should be directly related to the uniform building code and should be more specific than the bill in its present form.

Mr. Jim Harris, Chief Fire Marshal, Truckee Meadows and Representative for the State Fire Marshal Association spoke in support of the bill, but added that the Governor's Blue Ribbon Panel report should be used to make modifications to the bill.

Mr. Paul DeLorey, Representative, Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District gave testimony in support of the concept of Senate Bill Number 214. This testimony is listed as Exhibit C.

Mr. E. A. Sweitzer, Fire Protection Consultant for Nevada Resort Association and the Gaming Industry Association offered his expertise on the subject of fire protection to the committee.

Senator Kosinski asked Mr. Sweitzer how long it might take older hotels in the state of Nevada to be retrofitted.

Mr. Sweitzer said that the problem of retrofitting fire sprinklers throughout the state is that the fire sprinkler industry is a relatively small specialized industry. He said that in California, severe difficulty was experienced in trying to get qualified fire protection contractors for

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the retrofitting of hospitals and sanitariums. He said that he feels that Nevada will experience the same difficulty if retrofitting is required.

Mr. Sweitzer said that in his opinion, each building or facility will have to be reviewed individually to determine which components of the retrofit program are desirable and required. He added that this inspection, review, and recommendations could take a considerable amount of time.

Senator Kosinski asked how long a time Mr. Sweitzer was referring to.


Mr. Sweitzer said that a period of about three years had been discussed among the members of the Governor's Blue Ribbon Panel. He added that this period of time includes the time for actual retrofitting.

The Chairman asked that a subcommittee review the Governor's Blue Ribbon Panel report when it is completed and report back to the committee on March 17, 1981. He asked the following people to staff that subcommittee:

Mr. Tom Huddleston, State Fire Marshal, (Chairman)
Mr. Roy Parrish, Clark County Fire Chief
Mr. Marty Richard, Fire Marshal, City of Reno
Mr. Don Young, Fire Chief, City of Sparks
Mr. Julius Conigliaro, Representative, City of Las Vegas
Mr. E. A. Sweitzer, Fire Protection Consultant to Nevada Resort Association and the Gaming Industry Association


There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:12 a.m.

Respectfully submitted:



Connie Richards, Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:



Senator Joe Neal, Chairman

DATE: 3-10-81

SENATE AGENDA

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

EXHIBIT A

Committee on Human Resources and Facilities , Room 131 .

Day Wednesday , Date February 25 , Time 8:00 a.m.

S. B. No. 214--Requires sprinkler systems for fire protection in hotels and requires fire codes in counties and cities.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON Human Resources and Facilities

DATE: February 25, 1981

EXHIBIT B

PLEASE PRINT NAME	PLEASE PRINT ORGANIZATION & ADDRESS	PLEASE PRINT TELEPHONE
<i>Bob Hanson</i>	<i>Kayak</i>	
<i>W. Nelson</i>	<i>UP</i>	
<i>J. Higgins</i> ESTER, LAI	<i>Com. J. J. Under</i> JACKS VALLEY VFD	
F.A. SWETZER	NEVADA RESORT ASSOC. GAMING INDUSTRY ASSOC.	735-2611
F.E. LAHILL	NEVADA RESORT ASSOC	883 8306
Dennis K. Collins	State Fire Marshal	
<i>Will Dease</i>	<i>L.V. Police Officers Assn</i>	<i>883 0900</i>
<i>Raymond Parish</i>	<i>707 2nd St. Las Vegas</i>	<i>792-1416</i>
<i>Bill Bunker</i>	<i>Federated Firefighters of NV</i>	
<i>Bob Bopp</i>	<i>Prot Protection 313 Cass</i> <i>Las Vegas, NV 8 (DuPont)</i>	<i>462-391-4310</i>
PAUL DELOREY	TAHOE DOUGLAS FIRE DIST	588-3591
<i>Tommy Nicholson</i>	<i>State Fire Marshal</i>	<i>883 4220</i>
<i>BARBARA REEDY</i>	<i>NEVADA SOCIETY OF ARCHITECTS</i>	<i>529-4641</i>
<i>David Small</i>	<i>Gaming Industry Association</i>	<i>780 2306</i>
<i>Jim Adams</i>	<i>TWTPD USFA</i>	<i>785-4322</i>
<i>Timothy</i>	<i>Police</i>	<i>785 2333</i>
<i>John</i>	<i>Police</i>	<i>316-1011</i>
<i>Bob</i>	<i>Police</i>	
<i>Bob</i>	<i>Police</i>	
<i>City of North Las Vegas</i>	<i>City of North Las Vegas</i>	<i>882-3121</i>

BRUCE KANOFF
FIRE CHIEF
(702) 588-3591



P.O. BOX 919
ZEPHYR COVE
NEVADA 89448

February 25, 1981

EXHIBIT C

The Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District and its Board of Trustees supports SB 214 as a logical means of fostering public fire safety in hotels and high rise buildings.

Recent high rise fires in Las Vegas, New York, Oakland, San Francisco and San Palo, Brazil have resulted in tragic and needless deaths. All of the above are in metropolitan cities with a large, on duty, professional firefighting force. I have been informed that in the recent Hilton Hotel fire more than five hundred firefighters were engaged in rescue and suppression efforts. The Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District has a total of forty-eight firefighting personnel. Our neighbor, the City of South Lake Tahoe, California, and our closest mutual aid agency has a total of thirty-four firefighting personnel. Under present N.R.S. Statutes and other budgeting constraints we could never provide the on duty firefighting strength necessary to combat a major high rise fire. Our high rise buildings are just as complex as in any other community and we do not have the advantage of providing a large firefighting force, nor do we have available a large mutual aid force to draw from within a reasonable

EXHIBIT C

distance of response. Add to this problem the fact that our weather conditions frequently cause severe traffic problems that negate fast emergency response. Thus it becomes imperative that built-in fire protection systems be installed, and are operational, to prevent fires from becoming disasters or conflagrations.

Cost of installation of retrofitting sprinklers is generally recovered in less than ten years in reduced insurance premiums, and this reduction continues for the life of the building. Thus it becomes profitable to have installed sprinklers for fire protection. Also, the recent liability suits, aftermath of the Las Vegas fires, have gone beyond existing insurance limits, which places in jeopardy those corporations involved.

The Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District has long been aware of the problems associated with firefighting and life safety in high rise buildings and for that reason has actively pursued retrofitting of sprinklers for fire protection. Even though five of our seven casino complexes are fully sprinklered, we continue to seek further retrofitting of fire sprinkler systems, and recently requested a County ordinance to accomplish such retrofitting.