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Policy: Fire Safety

To ensure promote the public health, safety and welfare of our communities, Georgia's local governments are researching and implementing ways to contain and prevent the spread of house fires in neighborhoods. Protecting residents is a priority of all home builders who implement existing international code requirements in construction through materials and siding options.

The Greater Atlanta Home Builders Association strongly opposes sprinkler mandates in single-family (including town homes) structures. Sprinkler systems in homes lead to increased insurance premiums for homeowners. Further, these mandates cost an average of \$2 per square foot, which is passed on to the consumer, leading to increased housing costs and decreased affordability. Sprinklers have not been proven to enhance the safety of occupants and are not cost effective. Furthermore, the cost to home owners for maintaining sprinklers systems has not been considered by jurisdictions. Costs include maintenance, administration, backflow prevention devices and compliance, all of which would be the responsibility of local governments to monitor, at the taxpayers' expense.

The Greater Atlanta Home Builders Association supports an affirmative program of fire safety for residential construction that includes life safety improvements and cost effective components. Life safety improvements include checking appliances for fraying wires, providing periodic maintenance to heating systems and fireplaces, installing fire extinguishers and replacing smoke detectors and batteries (every six months) to decrease the possibility of a threat of a fire. The installation of a two-hour fire walls in town home style products is cost effective and proven to be safer than sprinkler systems.