

MOTION

PUBLIC SAFETY

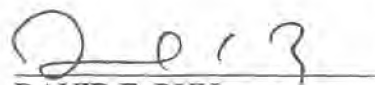
In Los Angeles, all commercial high-rises must have sprinkler systems installed. This requirement was adopted by the City Council in 1988, in the wake of a fire that killed one and injured 40 in Downtown's Interstate Tower, which was not equipped with sprinklers. However, not all residential high-rises are required to have sprinklers, as under the City's current building and fire safety requirements, residential high-rises built between 1943 and 1974 are not required to have sprinklers installed. Residents in these buildings are exposed to a higher risk of injury or death in a fire than those in older or newer high-rises, which have sprinkler requirements.

Recent events have highlighted the unique hazard posed by fire in high-rises without sprinkler systems. A fire in a Honolulu high-rise on July 14 killed three people and injured twelve. Officials in Honolulu stated that if that building had been required to meet current fire safety standards that require sprinklers, it is likely no one would have died and the fire would have been contained to one unit. Even more tragic is the fire that broke out in Grenfell Tower in London, England on the night of June 14. That high-rise fire, caused by a faulty freezer, killed over 80 people and injured 70. That tower too, did not have sprinklers installed, despite recently being renovated.

The City should not wait for a tragedy to occur in Los Angeles before taking action. A report on the scope of this issue would enable the Council to understand the problem, and decide what steps should be taken to address it. Further, the cost of installing sprinklers in residential high-rises should be included in this discussion. This will enable the Council to examine ways to assist property owners in covering the cost of installing sprinklers in these buildings, as is being done with newer seismic retrofit requirements.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Fire Department, with the assistance of the City Attorney and the Department of Building and Safety, report on current fire suppression and sprinkler system requirements for high-rise buildings built between 1943 and 1974, and what steps should be taken to update the building and fire codes to ensure that all residential high-rises in the City have sprinkler systems installed. This report should include the number of these buildings in the City, and should examine the feasibility of utilizing tax abatement or other financial tools to assist building owners cover the costs of these improvements, similar to any offered to building owners required to retrofit buildings to meet current seismic safety standards.

PRESENTED BY 
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AUG 04 2017

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SECONDED BY 

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