First Regular Session Seventy-fifth General Assembly STATE OF COLORADO

REVISED

This Version Includes All Amendments Adopted on Second Reading in the Second House

LLS NO. 25-0438.01 Pierce Lively x2059

HOUSE BILL 25-1273

HOUSE SPONSORSHIP

Boesenecker and Woodrow, Lindsay, McCormick, Smith

SENATE SPONSORSHIP

Ball and Hinrichsen,

House Committees

1 1 1

Senate Committees

Transportation, Housing & Local Government

State, Veterans, & Military Affairs

A BILL FOR AN ACT

01	CONCERNING REQUIRING CERTAIN MUNICIPALITIES TO MODIFY
02	BUILDING CODES TO ALLOW FIVE STORIES OF A MULTIFAMILY
03	RESIDENTIAL BUILDING TO BE SERVED BY A SINGLE EXIT.

Bill Summary

(Note: This summary applies to this bill as introduced and does not reflect any amendments that may be subsequently adopted. If this bill passes third reading in the house of introduction, a bill summary that applies to the reengrossed version of this bill will be available at http://leg.colorado.gov.)

The bill defines a subject jurisdiction as a municipality with a population of 100,000 or more that is served by a fire protection district or fire department that is or was accredited by a specified organization. On or before December 1, 2027, the bill requires the governing body of a subject jurisdiction to adopt a building code, or amend an existing

SENATE Amended 2nd Reading April 28, 2025

HOUSE 3rd Reading Unamended April 3, 2025

HOUSE Amended 2nd Reading April 2, 2025

Shading denotes HOUSE amendment. <u>Double underlining denotes SENATE amendment.</u>

Capital letters or bold & italic numbers indicate new material to be added to existing law.

Dashes through the words or numbers indicate deletions from existing law.

building code, to allow up to 5 stories of a multifamily residential building that satisfies certain conditions to be served by a single exit. This requirement only applies to the area within a subject jurisdiction that is served by a single fire protection district or fire department.

The bill also clarifies that the adoption or amendment of a building code to satisfy the requirements of the bill does not qualify as adopting or enforcing a building code for the purpose of determining whether the governing body of a municipality is required to adopt an energy code.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado:

SECTION 1. Legislative declaration. (1) The general assembly finds and declares that:

- (a) During the mid-twentieth century, the International Building Code, which many state and local governments in the United States use as the model for their building codes, began requiring buildings over 3 stories to have at least 2 separate stairway exits accessible from all points on each floor;
- (b) Multifamily buildings constructed under the current International Building Code must have 2 stairways, leading to most new multifamily buildings in the United States being constructed with housing units off a single corridor with a stairway at each end. This limits the feasibility of 2 and 3 bedroom units since all units except corner units only have windows on one side, according to "Exit Strategy: The Case for Single-Stair Egress" in the Architectural Record;
- (c) Multifamily buildings with single stairway exits can dedicate more interior space to create larger family-sized units, with multiple bedrooms and improved ventilation due to enabling most housing units to have windows on multiple sides, according to "The Seattle Special: A US City's Unique Approach to Small Infill Lots" Mercatus Center Policy Brief;

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(d) Multifamily buildings with 2 stairways typically need more
than a quarter of an acre per floor to meet underwriting requirements in
North American markets, which is far bigger than many small infill lots
in Colorado cities, even before accounting for setbacks, landscaping, and
other design criteria that limit the buildable area of a lot;

- (e) Single stairway designs enable economically feasible construction on small infill sites, whereas buildings constructed under the International Building Code with 2 interior stairways and a corridor take up such a significant portion of the allowable floor space that they are typically not physically or economically viable;
- (f) On a typical infill lot of 5,000 square feet, a second stairway and the hallway to connect it to the first stairway are estimated to take up about 10% of the potentially rentable or sellable floor space, resulting in an additional 10% of housing cost;
- (g) The city of Seattle, Washington allowed up to 6 story residential buildings to be constructed with a single stairway in 1977, following the recommendations of a building code advisory board to encourage infill redevelopment;
- (h) New York City began allowing single stairway buildings up to 6 stories several decades ago, and in 2012, the city of Honolulu adopted nearly identical amendments to its building code with regard to egress as Seattle;
- (i) Small multifamily buildings enabled by eliminating the requirement for 2 stairways would shorten the distance to an egress compared to large multifamily buildings with housing units on both sides of a long corridor;

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1	(j) In Colorado, there are 18 Commission on Fire Accreditation
2	International Accredited agencies that serve 48 local governments.
3	Accredited agencies are community-oriented, data-driven, and
4	outcome-focused and exemplify organizations that are strategic-minded,
5	well-organized, and properly equipped, staffed, and trained.
6	(k) The International Code Council, which crafts the International
7	Building Code relied upon by states and cities in the United States, is in
8	the process of drafting a code to enable more housing options served by
9	a single stairway;
10	(1) Single stair buildings also support quality of life, health, and
11	energy efficiency by enabling cross ventilation in most units, which
12	enables residents to use operable windows to bring in fresh air to improve
13	indoor air quality and draw in cool air in the summer in an
14	energy-efficient way;
15	(m) Larger jurisdictions in Colorado with a population over
16	100,000 are all considered urban by the federal census and have
17	significant opportunities to develop smart stair buildings on smaller lots
18	in infill areas; and
19	(n) Therefore, the general assembly declares that increasing the
20	housing supply through more flexible construction design for small
21	multifamily buildings is a matter of mixed statewide and local concern.
22	SECTION 2. In Colorado Revised Statutes, add 31-15-604 as
23	follows:
24	31-15-604. Single exit in multifamily residential structure -
25	<u>report -</u> definition. (1) Subject to the conditions set forth in
26	SUBSECTIONS (2), (3), AND (4) OF THIS SECTION AND NOTWITHSTANDING
27	ANY OTHER PROVISION OF LAW, ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 1, 2027, THE

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1	GOVERNING BODY OF A SUBJECT JURISDICTION SHALL ADOPT A BUILDING
2	CODE, OR AMEND THE SUBJECT JURISDICTION'S EXISTING BUILDING CODE,
3	TO ALLOW A SINGLE EXIT TO SERVE NO MORE THAN FIVE STORIES
4	<u>INCLUDING ANY OCCUPIABLE ROOF</u> OF A GROUP R-2 OCCUPANCY IN THE
5	SAME BUILDING, SO LONG AS THAT BUILDING:
6	(a) IS CONSTRUCTED OF MATERIALS THAT SATISFY INTERNATIONAL
7	BUILDING CODE TYPE \overline{II} , TYPE \overline{II} , OR TYPE \overline{IV} CONSTRUCTION STANDARDS;
8	(b) Is protected throughout, including at each landing of
9	THE EXIT STAIRWAY, WITH AN AUTOMATIC SPRINKLER SYSTEM THAT IS
10	DESIGNED AND INSTALLED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE <u>INTERNATIONAL</u>
11	BUILDING CODE;
12	(c) Has no more than twenty feet of travel to the exit
13	STAIRWAY FROM THE EXIT OR ENTRY DOOR OF ANY DWELLING UNIT;
14	(d) Has no more than one hundred twenty-five feet of
15	TRAVEL TO THE EXIT STAIRWAY FROM ANY POINT IN A DWELLING UNIT;
16	(e) EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN SUBSECTION $(1)(f)$ OF THIS SECTION,
17	DOES NOT HAVE A FLOOR WITH A SQUARE FOOTAGE GREATER THAN FOUR
18	THOUSAND FEET AND HAS AN EXIT STAIRWAY THAT IS AT LEAST
19	FORTY-EIGHT INCHES WIDE;
20	(f) DOES NOT HAVE A FLOOR WITH A SQUARE FOOTAGE GREATER
21	THAN SIX THOUSAND FEET AND HAS AN EXIT STAIRWAY WHOSE WIDTH IS
22	EQUAL TO OR GREATER THAN A NUMBER OF INCHES THAT IS IN THE SAME
23	RATIO TO FORTY-EIGHT AS THE SQUARE FOOTAGE OF THE FLOOR IS TO
24	FOUR THOUSAND BUT THAT IS LESS THAN FIFTY-FOUR INCHES;
25	(g) HAS NO MORE THAN FOUR DWELLING UNITS PER STORY;
26	(h) ONLY HAS OPENINGS TO THE EXIT STAIRWAY ENCLOSURE THAT
27	ALLOW EXIT ACCESS FROM NORMALLY OCCUPIED SPACES, EXIT ACCESS

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1	FROM THE EXIT STAIRWAY ENCLOSURE TO ANOTHER PROTECTED EXIT
2	COMPONENT, AND ACCESS TO THE EXTERIOR FROM THE EXIT STAIRWAY
3	ENCLOSURE;
4	
5	(i) IS FULLY PROTECTED THROUGHOUT ALL COMMON AREAS WITH
6	SMOKE DETECTION IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE NATIONAL FIRE
7	PROTECTION ASSOCIATION'S STANDARD 72, KNOWN AS THE "NATIONAL
8	FIRE ALARM AND SIGNALING CODE", AND THE INTERNATIONAL FIRE CODE;
9	(j) Does not have electrical receptacles in an exit
10	STAIRWAY ENCLOSURE;
11	(k) Does not have publicly accessible electrical
12	RECEPTACLES IN CORRIDORS BETWEEN DWELLING UNITS AND THE EXIT
13	STAIRWAY;
14	(1) Has, in accordance with the <u>international</u> building
15	CODE, AN EMERGENCY ESCAPE AND RESCUE OPENING ON EVERY FLOOR;
16	(m) HAS AN EXIT STAIRWAY THAT IS CONSTRUCTED IN
17	ACCORDANCE WITH THE <u>INTERNATIONAL</u> BUILDING CODE;
18	(n) HAS A FIRE-RESISTANT BOX THAT CONTAINS KEYS TO ACCESS
19	THE BUILDING AND THE DWELLING UNITS IN THE BUILDING, IS ACCESSIBLE
20	TO RELEVANT FIREFIGHTERS, AND IS ACCOMPANIED BY A SIGN INDICATING
21	THAT THE BUILDING IS ONLY SERVED BY A SINGLE EXIT STAIRWAY;
22	(o) HAS AN EXIT STAIRWAY THAT IS PROTECTED WITH TWO-HOUR
23	FIRE-RATED STAIR CONSTRUCTION REGARDLESS OF CONSTRUCTION TYPE;
24	(p) Has an exit stairway that is wide enough to allow
25	SIMULTANEOUS INGRESS AND EGRESS; AND
26	(q) Has passive and active fire protection features in
2.7	OCCUPIABLE SPACES THROUGHOUT THE BUILDING INCLUDING INDIVIDUAL

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1	DWELLING UNITS, THAT ARE PERIODICALLY INSPECTED AND MAINTAINED
2	BY A THIRD-PARTY APPROVED BY THE SUBJECT JURISDICTION;
3	(r) Has corridors that all have a minimum of one hour of
4	FIRE RESISTANCE, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE <u>INTERNATIONAL</u> BUILDING
5	CODE;
6	(s) HAS ELEVATOR AND EXIT STAIRWAY ENCLOSURES THAT ALL
7	HAVE SMOKE CONTROL SYSTEMS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE
8	<u>INTERNATIONAL</u> FIRE CODE;
9	(t) Has elevators that are all within two-hour shaft
10	ENCLOSURES, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE <u>INTERNATIONAL</u> BUILDING CODE;
11	<u> </u>
12	(u) Does not allow storage, including the storage of
13	DELIVERIES, TRASH, AND RECYCLING, WITHIN THE SPACE BETWEEN
14	DWELLING UNIT DOORS AND THE EXIT STAIRWAY; AND
15	(v) Does not have more than one story below grade plane.
16	(2) To satisfy the requirements of subsection (1) of this
17	SECTION, THE GOVERNING BOARD OF A SUBJECT JURISDICTION MAY
18	INCORPORATE BY REFERENCE, OR ADAPT AND ADOPT INTO THE SUBJECT
19	JURISDICTION'S BUILDING CODE, LANGUAGE FROM A PORTION OF AN
20	EXISTING BUILDING CODE OF ANY OTHER AMERICAN JURISDICTION THAT
21	ALLOWS A SINGLE EXIT TO SERVE NO MORE THAN FIVE STORIES <u>INCLUDING</u>
22	ANY OCCUPIABLE ROOF OF A GROUP R-2 OCCUPANCY IN THE SAME
23	BUILDING, SO LONG AS THE INCORPORATED, ADAPTED, OR ADOPTED
24	LANGUAGE WOULD SATISFY THE REQUIREMENTS OF THIS SECTION.
25	(3) A SUBJECT JURISDICTION SHALL COORDINATE WITH THE
26	APPLICABLE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT, FIRE DEPARTMENT, OR FIRE
2.7	AUTHORITY TO ENSURE IN ACCORDANCE WITH STANDARDS ESTABLISHED

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1	IN THE INTERNATIONAL BUILDING CODE AND INTERNATIONAL FIRE CODE,
2	THAT, FOR A BUILDING THAT SERVES NO MORE THAN FIVE STORIES OF A
3	GROUP R-2 OCCUPANCY AND SATISFIES THE REQUIREMENTS OF THIS
4	<u>SECTION:</u>
5	(a) AERIAL APPARATUS OF THE APPLICABLE FIRE PROTECTION
6	DISTRICT, FIRE DEPARTMENT, OR FIRE AUTHORITY CAN REACH THE
7	HIGHEST POINT OF THE BUILDING;
8	(b) The site design allows for direct vertical access to
9	THE ROOFLINE AND ALL UPPER FLOORS FROM AT LEAST ONE OF THE
10	REQUIRED AERIAL ACCESS SIDES USING AN AERIAL APPARATUS DEPLOYED
11	FROM GROUND LEVEL; AND
12	(c) The site design provides unobstructed aerial apparatus
13	ACCESS DEPLOYMENT OR POSITIONING.
14	(4) IN ADDITION TO THE REQUIREMENTS DESCRIBED IN SUBSECTION
15	(1) OF THIS SECTION, IF A BUILDING HAS BEEN CONSTRUCTED WITH A
16	SINGLE EXIT, THE BUILDING'S LANDLORD, MANAGER, OR OWNER SHALL
17	CONDUCT INSPECTIONS OF THE BUILDING'S DWELLING UNITS, IN ADDITION
18	TO THIRD-PARTY INSPECTIONS, AND PERMISSION FOR THE INSPECTIONS
19	SHALL BE INCLUDED IN THE LEASE AGREEMENTS FOR EACH DWELLING
20	<u>UNIT.</u>
21	(5) If a fire protection district or fire department does
22	NOT SERVE AN ENTIRE SUBJECT JURISDICTION, THE GOVERNING BOARD OF
23	THAT SUBJECT JURISDICTION MAY SATISFY THE REQUIREMENTS OF
24	SUBSECTION (1) OF THIS SECTION BY ADOPTING OR AMENDING THE
25	SUBJECT JURISDICTION'S EXISTING BUILDING CODE INSOFAR AS IT APPLIES
26	ONLY TO THE PORTION OF THE SUBJECT JURISDICTION THAT IS SERVED BY
27	A SINGLE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT OR FIRE DEPARTMENT.

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1	(6) The adoption of a building code, or the amendment of
2	A SUBJECT JURISDICTION'S EXISTING BUILDING CODE, BY THE GOVERNING
3	BODY OF A SUBJECT JURISDICTION TO COMPLY WITH SUBSECTION (1) OF
4	THIS SECTION, IS NOT ADOPTING OR ENFORCING A BUILDING CODE FOR
5	PURPOSES OF DETERMINING WHETHER A GOVERNING BODY OF A
6	MUNICIPALITY IS REQUIRED TO ADOPT AND ENFORCE AN ENERGY CODE
7	PURSUANT TO SECTION 31-15-602.
8	(7) A SUBJECT JURISDICTION SHALL INCLUDE THE LOCAL
9	INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE FIGHTER'S AFFILIATE, IF ONE
10	EXISTS, WITHIN THE SUBJECT JURISDICTION'S JURISDICTION AND THE
11	COLORADO PROFESSIONAL FIRE FIGHTERS ASSOCIATION ON THE LIST OF
12	PERSONS TO PROVIDE NOTICE OF MEETINGS PURSUANT TO SECTION
13	24-6-402 (7) WITH RESPECT TO THE DISCUSSION OF ADOPTING OR
14	AMENDING A BUILDING CODE PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (1) OF THIS
15	SECTION.
16	(8) Nothing in this section requires the governing body of
17	A SUBJECT JURISDICTION TO AMEND A SUBJECT JURISDICTION'S ZONING
18	CODE WITH RESPECT TO MULTIFAMILY RESIDENTIAL HOUSING.
19	(9) NOTHING IN THIS SECTION PREVENTS A SUBJECT JURISDICTION,
20	FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT, FIRE DEPARTMENT, OR FIRE AUTHORITY FROM
21	APPLYING AND ENFORCING A LOCALLY ADOPTED LIFE SAFETY CODE. A
22	LOCALLY ADOPTED LIFE SAFETY CODE MAY INCLUDE, BUT IS NOT LIMITED
23	TO, STANDARDS GOVERNING EMERGENCY VEHICLE SITE ACCESS, FIRE
24	HYDRANT SPACING, AND LANDSCAPE CLEARANCE.
25	(10) A SUBJECT JURISDICTION SHALL ENSURE THAT A BUILDING
26	THAT SERVES NO MORE THAN FIVE STORIES OF A GROUP R-2 OCCUPANCY
27	AND SATISFIES THE REQUIREMENTS OF THIS SECTION:

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1	(a) Retains its legal occupancy status, even if a future
2	BUILDING CODE ADOPTED BY THE SUBJECT JURISDICTION WOULD
3	DISALLOW THE CONSTRUCTION OF THAT BUILDING; AND
4	(b) If that building is damaged or destroyed, the subject
5	JURISDICTION SHALL ALLOW THE BUILDING TO BE REBUILT ACCORDING TO
6	THE SAME STANDARDS THAT WERE IN PLACE WHEN THE SUBJECT
7	JURISDICTION ISSUED THE ORIGINAL CONSTRUCTION PERMIT FOR THE
8	BUILDING.
9	(11) (a) On or before December 1, 2028, and each December
10	1 THEREAFTER, A SUBJECT JURISDICTION SHALL REPORT TO THE STATE
11	DEMOGRAPHY OFFICE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL AFFAIRS, IN A FORM
12	AND MANNER DETERMINED BY THE STATE DEMOGRAPHY OFFICE,
13	CONCERNING THE PREVIOUS TWELVE MONTHS:
14	(I) THE NUMBER OF PERMITS THAT THE SUBJECT JURISDICTION
15	ISSUED FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF BUILDINGS WITH A SINGLE EXIT THAT
16	SERVES NO MORE THAN FIVE STORIES OF A GROUP R-2 OCCUPANCY AND
17	SATISFIES THE REQUIREMENTS OF THIS SECTION; AND
18	(II) FOR EACH BUILDING THAT THE SUBJECT JURISDICTION ISSUED
19	A PERMIT AS DESCRIBED IN SUBSECTION (10)(a)(I) OF THIS SECTION:
20	(A) THE NUMBER OF DWELLING UNITS IN THE BUILDING;
21	(B) THE NUMBER OF STORIES THAT THE BUILDING HAS;
22	(C) THE GROSS BUILDING AREA; AND
23	(D) THE TOTAL NUMBER OF EMERGENCY INCIDENTS, INCLUDING
24	FIRE AND MEDICAL CALLS, THAT OCCURRED, AS REPORTED BY THE
25	RELEVANT EMERGENCY DISPATCH CENTER.
26	(b) (I) Prior to January 2032, the department of Local
2.7	AFFAIRS SHALL CONSULT WITH THE COLORADO PROFESSIONAL FIRE

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1	FIGHTERS ASSOCIATION CONCERNING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS
2	<u>SECTION.</u>
3	(II) IN JANUARY 2032, THE DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL AFFAIRS SHALL
4	INCLUDE, AS PART OF ITS PRESENTATION DURING ITS "SMART ACT"
5	HEARING REQUIRED BY SECTION 2-7-203, INFORMATION CONCERNING THE
6	IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS SECTION.
7	(12) NOTHING IN THIS SECTION PREVENTS A GOVERNING BODY OF
8	A SUBJECT JURISDICTION FROM ALLOWING ANY TYPE OF BUILDING WITH
9	GROUP R-2 OCCUPANCY TO BE SERVED BY A SINGLE EXIT IN ACCORDANCE
10	WITH AN EDITION OF THE INTERNATIONAL BUILDING CODE PUBLISHED BY
11	THE INTERNATIONAL CODE COUNCIL ON OR AFTER JANUARY 1, 2027.
12	(13) NOTHING IN THIS SECTION PREVENTS THE GOVERNING BODY
13	OF A SUBJECT JURISDICTION FROM APPLYING SECTIONS OF THE
14	INTERNATIONAL BUILDING CODE, THE INTERNATIONAL FIRE CODE,
15	REFERENCED STANDARDS, AND OTHER ORDINANCES OR LAWS NOT
16	SPECIFICALLY REFERENCED IN THIS SECTION TO A BUILDING SERVED BY
17	SINGLE EXIT.
18	(14) As used in this section, unless the context otherwise
19	REQUIRES:
20	
21	(a) "DWELLING UNIT" MEANS A SINGLE UNIT PROVIDING COMPLETE,
22	INDEPENDENT LIVING FACILITIES FOR ONE OR MORE PERSONS, INCLUDING
23	PERMANENT PROVISIONS FOR LIVING, SLEEPING, EATING, COOKING, AND
24	SANITATION.
25	
26	(b) "GROUP R-2 OCCUPANCY" MEANS A RESIDENTIAL OCCUPANCY
27	CONTAINING SLEEPING UNITS OR MORE THAN TWO DWELLING UNITS WHERE

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1	THE OCCUPANTS ARE PRIMARILY PERMANENT IN NATURE.
2	(c) "INTERNATIONAL BUILDING CODE" MEANS THE MOST CURRENT
3	EDITION OF THE INTERNATIONAL BUILDING CODE PUBLISHED BY THE
4	International Code Council.
5	(d) "International fire code" means the most current
6	EDITION OF THE INTERNATIONAL FIRE CODE PUBLISHED BY THE
7	International Code Council.
8	(e) "SUBJECT JURISDICTION" MEANS A MUNICIPALITY:
9	(I) WITH A POPULATION OF ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND OR GREATER;
10	AND
11	(II) THAT IS SERVED BY A FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT, FIRE
12	DEPARTMENT, OR FIRE AUTHORITY THAT HAS BEEN ACCREDITED BY THE
13	COMMISSION ON FIRE ACCREDITATION INTERNATIONAL, EVEN IF THE FIRE
14	PROTECTION DISTRICT, FIRE DEPARTMENT, OR FIRE AUTHORITY LATER
15	LOSES THAT ACCREDITATION, AND THAT MEETS THE AERIAL APPARATUS
16	REQUIREMENTS FOR THE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT'S, FIRE DEPARTMENT'S,
17	OR FIRE AUTHORITY'S INSURANCE SERVICES OFFICE PUBLIC PROTECTION
18	CLASSIFICATION RATING.
19	(f) "Two-hour fire-rated stair construction" means
20	CONTINUOUS WALL, FLOOR, OR ROOF ASSEMBLIES ENCLOSING A STAIRWAY
21	THAT ARE DESIGNED TO RESTRICT THE SPREAD OF FIRE, EXCESSIVE HEAT,
22	OR HOT GASES, SUCH THAT THE CONSTRUCTION CONTINUES TO PERFORM
23	ITS STRUCTURAL FUNCTION FOR AT LEAST TWO HOURS AS DETERMINED BY
24	TEST PROCEDURES SET FORTH IN AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR TESTING AND
25	MATERIALS STANDARD E-119, UNDERWRITERS LABORATORIES STANDARD
26	263, OR OTHER METHODS APPROVED BY THE RELEVANT SUBJECT
27	JURISDICTION.

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1	(15) This section is repealed, effective July 1, 2037.
2	SECTION 3. Safety clause. The general assembly finds
3	determines, and declares that this act is necessary for the immediate
4	preservation of the public peace, health, or safety or for appropriations for
5	the support and maintenance of the departments of the state and state
6	institutions.

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