



National Electrical Manufacturers Association

Senator Sampson Jackson II
Room: 407
P. O. Box 1018
Jackson, MS 39215

February 19, 2016

Via email: sjackson@senate.ms.gov

Dear Senator Jackson,

On behalf of the National Electrical Manufacturers Association's (NEMA) Fire, Life Safety, Security and Emergency Communication Section, I am writing to express our support for SB 2041 which, if passed, would require the installation of listed carbon monoxide (CO) detection equipment in new and existing school buildings.

NEMA is the association of electrical equipment manufacturers, founded in 1926 and headquartered in Rosslyn, Virginia. Its member companies manufacture a diverse set of products including power transmission and distribution equipment, lighting systems, factory automation and control systems, and medical diagnostic imaging systems. Worldwide annual sales of NEMA-scope products exceed \$100 billion. NEMA Fire, Life Safety, Security and Emergency Communication Section members manufacture fire, smoke, and carbon monoxide detection and warning equipment.

As you know, CO poisoning is the leading cause of accidental poisoning death in the United States. High concentrations of CO—a colorless, odorless gas that is produced when fossil fuel is incompletely burned—can cause cognitive impairment, loss of consciousness, coma, and often death. Because it is undetectable through human sensory experience, CO is commonly known as “the silent killer.” The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that every year, more than 400 people die in the U.S. from accidental CO poisoning. In addition, over 20,000 individuals are injured due to CO poisoning each year. Due to their smaller size, children are especially vulnerable to the effects of CO, may be more severely affected by exposure to the gas, and may exhibit signs (which often mimic the flu) sooner. As such, an adult teacher may not intuitively recognize that a number of sleepy students could be attributable to exposure to elevated levels of CO if she/he has not been affected to the same extent.

NEMA's support for the bill notwithstanding, we respectfully submit the following technical amendment for your consideration:

(3) State regulations shall

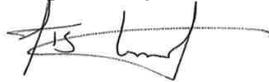
(d) Prohibit, for NEW OR SUBSTANTIALLY REMODELED public and nonpublic schools buildings, the installation of any battery-operated carbon monoxide warning equipment or any plug-in carbon monoxide warning equipment ~~that has a battery as its back-up power source.~~

The 2015 editions of the International Building Code and International Fire Code require hardwired CO detection for new and substantially remodeled schools, while leaving existing schools the option to use battery-operated or plug-in models. This allowance was added to the models codes by fire and life safety experts as an effort to reduce the cost burden on the school districts (e.g. taxpayers) that would otherwise have to cover the cost of retro-fitting the majority of school buildings with hardwired alarms or detectors.

NEMA also recommends prohibiting the use of all plug-in CO detection equipment in new or substantially remodeled schools, not just those with battery back-up power sources.

Thank you for your leadership on this issue, and best wishes for your continued success. NEMA stands ready to work with you on passing this important piece of legislation. Should you want to discuss further, I can be reached at 703-841-3245 or jonathan.stewart@nema.org

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jonathan Stewart', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Jonathan Stewart
Manager, Government Relations