

HOUSE BILL 1649

By Hill T

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 56, Chapter 19; Title 62, Chapter 32; Title 68, Chapter 102 and Title 68, Chapter 120, relative to fire sprinklers in places of worship.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 68, Chapter 102, Part 1, is amended by adding the following language as a new section:

**68-102-154.**

(a) For purposes of this section, unless the context otherwise requires:

(1) "Building code" means any nationally recognized code that has been adopted by reference by the state or local government, or any code that has been implemented by ordinance or resolution by a local government;

(2) "Place of worship" means any building that is:

(A) Approved, or meeting criteria for approval, by the state board of equalization for property tax exemption pursuant to § 67-5-212, based on ownership and use of the building by a religious institution; and

(B) Utilized on a regular basis by the religious institution as the site of congregational services, rites, or activities communally undertaken for the purpose of worship; and

(2) "Water supply" means water supplied by a public or private utility water main, gravity tank, pressure tank, reservoir, or well.

(b) Notwithstanding any law, rule, building code, or fire safety standard to the contrary, a fire protection sprinkler system shall not be required in a single-story building located in an unincorporated area that meets all of the following requirements:

- (1) Is a place of worship;
- (2) Has a capacity of no more than four hundred (400) persons;
- (3) Does not have a water supply located on the property;
- (4) Has a minimum of two (2) exits, plus one (1) additional exit for every two thousand five hundred square feet (2,500 sq. ft.) or portion thereof over four thousand five hundred square feet (4,500 sq. ft.);
- (5) Has a fire alarm system; and
- (6) Has fixed seating for at least two hundred fifty (250) persons.

(c) It is the intent of the general assembly that this section shall apply retroactively to any place of worship built on or after July 1, 2012.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring

it.