C A L I F O R N I A L E G I S L A T U R E

SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE

ON

MOBILE AND MANUFACTURED HOMES

SENATOR JOSEPH L. DUNN
CHAIR

TRANSCRIPT AND REPORT OF HEARINGS ON

MOBILEHOME PARK FIRE HYDRANT SAFETY

FEBRUARY 4, 2000

GARDEN GROVE, CALIFORNIA

1032-S

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JOSEPH L. DUNN
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MOBILEHOME PARK FIRE HYDRANT SAFETY
Information & Background Paper

February 4, 2000 Hearing

Garden Grove Community Center
11300 Stanford, Room B
Garden Grove, California

Purpose

The purpose of the February 4th hearing is to seek information on the effect of state laws and regulations governing fire protection for mobilehome parks, particularly those relating to fire hydrants, in order to determine whether those regulations or laws need to be streamlined or updated.

Summary

A tragic and highly publicized fire in a mobilehome park in Southern California in December 1999 brought to light inconsistencies in fire safety regulations for mobilehome parks. The state fire code authorizes local fire chiefs to require fire hydrants in mobilehome parks in their jurisdictions in accordance with current fire local code standards. But the Mobilehome Parks Act, which establishes uniform code standards for mobilehome parks, imposes an older, lesser standard that requires hydrants in parks built only since September 1, 1968. Most parks fall under the enforcement authority of the state, where the lesser standards are in force, but where local governments have assumed enforcement authority by agreement from the state, they may impose more stringent fire code standards and test and inspect the hydrants. State standards under which the state enforces the Parks Act provide for the adoption of hydrant inspection and

maintenance procedures, but the state does not test hydrants to ensure they are operational. Although some local fire agencies may test and inspect hydrants in parks under state jurisdiction, maintenance of these hydrants occurs, if at all, with little oversight. Among others, questions have arisen about the confusing overlap of state regulations, whether older pre-1968 HCD parks that may be more vulnerable to fire hazards should be required to have the same standard of hydrant protection as newer parks, and why standards have not been adopted for the testing of hydrants in parks over which the state has jurisdiction.

Hearing Procedure

The proceeding is relatively informal. Witnesses will be called upon to give statements or make presentations in the order in which they appear on the agenda. Witnesses are not sworn in and cross-examination by opposing parties is not permitted. However, witnesses are asked to identify themselves and their place of residence or business and may be asked questions by legislators and staff on the committee panel. Individual presentations should be no more than 5 - 7 minutes, exclusive of any questions and answers from the panel. The proceeding will be tape recorded for later transcription in a hearing report published by the committee in the spring.

Mobilehome Parks in California

According to the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), there are 5,070 mobilehome parks in California with some 376,000 spaces. An estimated 714,000 residents live in these parks. Since 1929, the state has established health and safety standards for auto courts (later mobilehome parks). In 1967, the modern Mobilehome Parks Act was adopted, giving the Commission on Housing and Community Development (now Department) authority to regulate the construction, use, maintenance, and occupancy of mobilehome parks. A statutory annual $25 fee per park, plus $2 per space, is charged each park for renewal of the annual permit to operate. Regulations are enforced by inspection at the time of initial construction of the park and as a condition of granting the initial permit to operate. Subsequent to the initial inspection, and until 1991, regulations were enforced by HCD only on a complaint basis, with the inspection limited to the matter addressed by the complaint and not a general inspection of the whole park

In 1990, the Legislature enacted and the Governor signed AB-925 (O'Connell), which

established the Mobilehome Park Inspection Program, requiring every mobilehome park in the state to undergo a general inspection at least once during a 5-year period starting in 1991. An additional $4 fee per space per year was imposed on parks by this legislation, half of which can be passed through by the park owner to park residents. Some 85 local jurisdictions have entered into agreements with HCD to perform these enforcement responsibilities. Because of budgetary and other constraints, however, the Legislature twice extended the time HCD had to complete the inspections and designated a December, 1999 sunset for the program. According to HCD officials who spoke at a November, 1997 committee hearing, as of that time HCD inspections had uncovered more than 150,000 park violations and 351,000 space or resident violations, everything from loose stairway handrails to more serious violations involving utility systems or fire safety. According to HCD, as of 1997, 83% of the violations discovered by the AB-925 inspections had been corrected.

In 1998-99 the Legislature debated the renewal of the Mobilehome Park Inspection Program for 2000 and beyond, with opposition from park owners and some homeowners to increased fees suggested by HCD and some local enforcement agencies as necessary to operate a more "complete" program. SB-700 (O'Connell) was eventually signed by the Governor, effective January 1, 2000. It authorized a new "Phase II" inspection program through the end of 2006 (7 years), using the existing $4 per space fee structure, but focusing the HCD inspection program on parks with the most serious violations (based on records from the '91-'99 inspections) or complaints. Under the new program, not every park under HCD jurisdiction will be inspected under "Phase II."

The Compton Fire

There are 13 mobilehome parks in Compton, under enforcement authority of the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), 11 of which did not have fire hydrants installed on the premises until recently. In 1997, the city, at the behest of the fire department, required parks in the city, including the El Rancho Mobilehome Park, a 162-space park at 16002 S. Atlantic Blvd., to install fire hydrants. The El Rancho Park hired a contractor to install 4 fire hydrants in 1998 at a cost of approximately $50,000 but thereafter problems arose when the park owner found he would have to tie the hydrants into the city water system on

the far side, rather than the park side, of Atlantic Ave. at an additional cost of $17,000. Thereafter, a dispute arose between the park owner and the city over whether the city or the park would pay this additional cost. Upon an inquiry to HCD by a representative of the Western Mobilehome Parkowners Association (WMA) in March, 1999 about the hydrant issue, HCD responded by letter that the state's Mobilehome Parks Act pre-empted the field and the City of Compton had no authority to require hydrants in parks within the city. Negotiations continued between the park owner and the city. The park applied for a permit to install the line under Atlantic Avenue in June, 1999, which was approved by the city in December.

About 1 a.m. on Sunday, December 19th a fire broke out in the kitchen of the mobilehome on space 25C, in which 3 people, including a grandmother and her 8 and 10 year old grandchildren, died. Neighbors tried to put the fire out with garden hoses, but when the Compton Fire Department arrived the mobilehome was already fully involved. Newspaper accounts claimed that fire fighters discovered that the fire hydrants were useless, and valuable time was spent "scrambling" to hook up 1,200 feet of hose to the nearest hydrant on the public street. Others say the fire department, knowing the park hydrants didn't work, was prepared from the beginning to fight the fire with two pumpers holding 1,000 gallons and hoses extended from the public street. Before the fire was brought under control, it spread destroying a second and damaging a third mobilehome. At the time this background paper was printed, no official report on the fire from the city fire department was available to the committee.

The same week as the fire, the city notified the park owner by letter that the water main on Atlantic was only 4 inches and inadequate to provide necessary fire flow to the park's 6 inch fire hydrants and that the line would need to be connected, instead, to an 8 inch city water main on Alondra Blvd., less than a block north. The city has reportedly agreed to pay the cost of hooking up the park to the Alondra main. The city council also passed a resolution in late December to enter into an agreement to take over enforcement of the Mobilehome Parks Act in the city from HCD.

Two Standards

The Office of the State Fire Marshal promotes fire protection by promulgating standards for, among others, state-owned and occupied buildings, high-rise structures, children's homes,

nurseries, homes for the aged, schools, and public assembly halls (presumably including mobilehome park clubhouses) with occupancy of 50 or more people. (Health & Safety Code Sec. 13143). The State Fire Marshal aids local agencies in the enforcement of laws and ordinances relating to fire prevention and has promulgated, though not adopted, state fire code standards that require, at the discretion of the local fire chief, mobilehome parks to provide and maintain fire hydrants supplying the required fire flow, when any building or facility is in excess of 150 feet from a water supply on a public street. The hydrants shall be maintained in an operative condition and subject to periodic tests as required by the chief in accordance with approved standards. (Sections 901.6, 903.2, 903.4.1.2, Article 9, Part III, CA Fire Code). Most local fire agencies have adopted these guidelines, with variations, in their local fire codes.

Mobilehome Parks Act regulations adopted by HCD provide that fire protection equipment meeting 1977 National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards be installed in parks of 15 or more spaces built after September 1, 1968. (Health & Safety Code Sec. 18691 and Sec. 1300, Article 6, Chap. 2, Div. 1, Title 25 of CA Code of Administrative Regulations). The 1977 NFPA standards call for hydrants to be installed so that, for a concentrated fire flow around an "important building," hose lines shall not exceed 500 feet. (Sec. 4-2.1, Chapter 4, NFPA 24-1977). Local agencies may adopt more stringent fire code requirements than those of the Parks Act for mobilehome parks only if they assume jurisdiction to enforce the entire Parks Act. (Sec 1304, Article 6, Chap. 2, Div. 1, Title 25). The regulations also provide that no fire protection installation shall be made without a permit from HCD and approval from the local fire department (Sec. 1306). Each mobilehome lot or space must have a ¾ inch valved water outlet (garden hose size) for fire protection (Sec. 1308). Lastly, where fire department services are not available, parks shall establish a private hydrant system with a 1 1/2" valved hydrant within 75 feet of each lot (Sec. 1312).

Comments

1. Information vacuum? The committee has found there is a vacuum of information, making it difficult to determine how many parks have hydrants. HCD has no statistical information available on the ages of California's 5,070 mobilehome parks, or how many have been constructed since September 1, 1968. HCD also has no statistics on the number of parks

under state jurisdiction that have fire hydrants, or if they have hydrants, to what standard the hydrants conform. Most local jurisdictions with park enforcement authority (less than 1/3 of the parks in the state) know the hydrant status of their parks. Generally speaking, according to sources familiar with the history of mobilehome parks, most are thought to have been built during the '50's, '60's and early '70's, with the vast majority constructed prior to 1968.

2. Overlapping & confusing standards? One of HCD's regulations references recognized 1977 National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards for mobilehome parks built since 1968 (Sec. 1300). The 1977 standards call for hydrants to be installed so that, for a concentrated fire flow around an "important building," hose lines shall not exceed 500 feet. Yet, another HCD regulation provides that no hydrant shall be installed without approval from the local fire department (Sec. 1306). Should the regulations be streamlined to more clearly define which standards, local or NFPA, apply to park hydrants under HCD jurisdiction?

3. Outdated standards? There have been three new NFPA editions adopted since 1977, the latest in 1995, with a number of differences between the 1977 and 1995 editions regarding hydrant installation and maintenance standards. For example, the 1995 NFPA standards call for annual testing of wet barrel hydrants and semi-annual testing of dry-barrel hydrant testing in the early spring and fall. The 1977 NFPA standards don't even address this issue. Should HCD regulations be revised to reference the newer NFPA standards, rather than the 1977 edition?

4. Double standard? There appear to be two sets of fire hydrant standards for mobilehome parks, those adopted by local fire agencies that are similar to guidelines promulgated by the State Fire Marshal in the California Fire Code, and another pre-emptive but weaker standard, adopted by HCD and applicable to mobilehome parks under state jurisdiction. The Mobilehome Parks Act provision limiting installation of fire hydrants to parks built after September 1, 1968 is based on Health & Safety Code Section 18691, enacted in 1966. The committee has not been able to determine the legislative intent of this 34 year old statute. The apparent intent was to "grandfather-in" older parks to save owners the cost of retrofitting them with fire hydrants. Yet HCD regulations, possibly drawn up as some kind of compromise, also allow local agencies which assume enforcement jurisdiction of the Parks Act, such as Compton, to impose greater fire protection standards. Should cities and counties have to assume

enforcement of the entire Parks Act in order to enforce their own stronger fire protection standards for mobilehome parks? Should older parks under HCD that are arguably more susceptible to fire hazards be subject to better fire protection standards or continue to be exempt under convoluted double standards adopted more than 30 years ago?

4. Hydrants that don't work? The Mobilehome Parks Act provides that fire protection equipment meeting the requirements of the National Fire Protection Association Standard No. 24, 1977 Edition, shall be installed and maintained in parks built after September 1, 1968. Those standards provide that the hydrants shall be tested at least annually for proper functioning in accordance with requirements of the authority having jurisdiction. HCD has not adopted any requirements for testing, flushing or maintaining fire hydrants in those mobilehome parks. An HCD representative told the committee that on a park inspection HCD will inspect the outside of the hydrant to assure that it has no obvious defects (leaks, missing parts, etc.) but that HCD inspectors do not have the "expertise" to test fire hydrants. Park operators are not required by HCD to keep records indicating whether park fire hydrants have been tested or inspected on a regular basis and by whom. Apparently, few local fire departments check hydrants in parks that are not under their own local enforcement. Should mobilehome parks under HCD jurisdiction that have fire hydrants be subject to regular inspection and testing of those hydrants to assure they work? Should HCD or local fire agencies test and inspect mobilehome park fire hydrants?

5. Pre-planning the fire. One local fire marshal told committee staff that pre-fire planning for mobilehome parks by his department calls for using pumpers and running hoses back to hydrants on a public street as a matter of course because his department does not consider park hydrants, where they exist, to be "reliable." Apparently, many local fire agencies have such plans for fighting fires in mobilehome parks. Do all local fire agencies have such contingency plans or preparedness plans for fighting fires in mobilehome parks in their areas? Should pre-planning, specifically for mobilehome fires in parks where hydrants don't exist or don't work, be required by state law or regulation?

###

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS WITH MOBILEHOME PARK INSPECTION AUTHORITY

COUNTIES:

Alameda
Contra Costa
Del Norte
Imperial
Modoc
Monterey
Napa
Riverside
San Bernardino
San Diego
San Mateo
Santa Barbara
Stanislaus
Tuolumne

CITIES:

Adelanto
Anaheim
Bell
Big Bear
Brisbane
Burbank
Calistoga
Camarillo
Capitola
Carlsbad
Cathedral City
Chula Vista
Coachella
Cofax
* Cudahy
Cypress
Daly City
Dana Point
Desert Hot Springs
Dinuba
El Cajon
El Monte
Escondido
Folsom
Fontana
Fountain Valley
Garden Grove
Greenfield
Hemet
Huntington Beach
Indio
Irvine
La Mesa
Lake Elsinor
Lancaster
Los Alamitos
Lynwood
Marina
Modesto
Needles

*Compton added 12-99

Article 6. Fire Protection Standards for Mobilehome Parks

§ 1300. Application and Scope.

Fire protection equipment meeting the requirements of the National Fire Protection Association Standard No. 24, 1977 Edition, shall be installed and maintained in every park consisting of 15 or more lots constructed after September 1, 1968, or, mobilehome parks enlarged to consist of 15 or more lots. Installation of fire protection equipment is required only for the new lots added.

NOTE: Authority cited: Sections 18300 and 18691, Health and Safety Code. Reference: Section 18691, Health and Safety Code.

HISTORY

1. Amendment filed 8-22-85; effective upon filing pursuant to Government Code Section 11346.2(d) (Register 85, No. 36).

§ 1302. Application and Scope.

NOTE: Authority cited: Section 18300, Health and Safety Code. Reference: Sections 18300 and 18691, Health and Safety Code.

HISTORY

1. Repealer filed 8-22-85; effective upon filing pursuant to Government Code Section 11346.2(d) (Register 85, No. 36).

§ 1304. Local Regulations.

The provisions of this article are not applicable in a mobilehome park within a city, county, or city and county which has adopted and is enforcing a fire prevention code imposing restrictions equal to or greater than the restrictions imposed by these regulations and which is the enforcement agency.

NOTE: Authority cited: Section 18300, Health and Safety Code. Reference: Section 18300, Health and Safety Code.

§ 1306. Permits Required.

No person shall construct, reconstruct, or alter any installations relating to fire protection equipment with a mobilehome park unless he has obtained a written permit from the enforcement agency with written evidence of approval from the local fire department.

NOTE: Authority cited: Section 18300, Health and Safety Code. Reference: Section 18500, Health and Safety Code.

§ 1308. Lot Installations.

Each lot constructed shall have installed a 3/4-inch valved water outlet designed for connecting a 3/4-inch female swivel hose connection for fire suppression use in addition to the water connection to the mobilehome.

NOTE: Authority cited: Section 18300, Health and Safety Code. Reference: Section 18691, Health and Safety Code.

§ 1310. Hydrants.

Where the required water supply is not adequate to comply with N.F.P.A. Standard No. 24, 1977, outside protection, or local conditions justify reducing this requirement, other hydrant systems may be installed provided the alternate system is approved by the fire department and enforcement agency.

NOTE: Authority cited: Sections 18300 and 18691, Health and Safety Code. Reference: Section 18691, Health and Safety Code.

HISTORY

1. Amendment filed 8-22-85; effective upon filing pursuant to Government Code Section 11346.2(d) (Register 85, No. 36).

§ 1312. Private Systems.

In areas where fire department services are not available, as determined by the enforcement agency, a private fire protection system shall be installed and maintained consisting of hydrant risers connected to the park water main or a separate system capable of delivering 75 gpm at 30 psi with at least two lines open, in addition to the normal requirements of the park, and with the hydrants located within 75 feet of each lot. Each hydrant shall be provided with an approved 1 1/2" hose valve and connection with one 1 1/2" national standard male outlet and shall have connected thereto a minimum of 75 feet of 1 1/2" cotton or dacron jacketed rubber lined fire hose with an approved cone type nozzle with a minimum 1/2" orifice. Fire hose shall be mounted on an approved hose rack or reel enclosed in a wooden or metal cabinet which shall be painted red and marked "FIRE HOSE" in four-inch letters of contrasting color.

NOTE: Authority cited: Section 18300, 18610 and 18691, Health and Safety Code. Reference: Sections 18610 and 18691, Health and Safety Code.

HISTORY

1. Amendment filed 8-22-85; effective upon filing pursuant to Government Code Section 11346.2(d) (Register 85, No. 36).

HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE
Section 18691

18691. The department shall adopt rules and regulations which it determines are reasonably consistent with generally recognized fire protection standards, governing conditions relating to the prevention of fire or for the protection of life and property against fire in parks. The department shall adopt and submit building standards for approval pursuant to Chapter 4 (commencing with Section 18935) of Part 2.5 for the purposes described in this section within permanent buildings.

The regulations adopted by the department shall be applicable in all parks, except in a park within a city, county, or city and county which has adopted and is enforcing a fire prevention code imposing restrictions equal to or greater than the restrictions imposed by such building standards published in the State Building Standards Code and the other state regulations adopted by the department and which city, county, or city and county is the enforcement agency.

Notwithstanding the provisions of this section, the rules and regulations adopted by the department relating to the installation of water supply and fire hydrant systems shall not apply within parks constructed, or approved for construction, prior to January 1, 1966.

PART III

GENERAL PROVISIONS FOR SAFETY

ARTICLE 9 — FIRE DEPARTMENT ACCESS AND WATER SUPPLY

SECTION 901 — GENERAL

901.1 Scope. Fire department access and water supply shall be in accordance with Article 9.

For firesafety during construction, alteration or demolition of a building, see Article 87.

901.2 Permits and Plans.

901.2.1 Permits. A permit is required to use or operate fire hydrants or valves intended for fire-suppression purposes which are installed on water systems and accessible to public highways, alleys or private ways open to or generally used by the public. See Section 105, Permit f.1.

> **EXCEPTION:** A permit is not required for persons employed and authorized by the water company which supplies the system to use or operate fire hydrants or valves.

901.2.2 Plans.

901.2.2.1 Fire apparatus access. Plans for fire apparatus access roads shall be submitted to the fire department for review and approval prior to construction.

901.2.2.2 Fire hydrant systems. Plans and specifications for fire hydrant systems shall be submitted to the fire department for review and approval prior to construction.

901.3 Timing of Installation. When fire protection, including fire apparatus access roads and water supplies for fire protection, is required to be installed, such protection shall be installed and made serviceable prior to and during the time of construction.

> **EXCEPTION:** When alternate methods of protection, as approved, are provided, the requirements of Section 901.3 may be modified or waived.

901.4 Required Marking of Fire Apparatus Access Roads, Addresses and Fire-protection Equipment.

901.4.1 General. Marking of fire apparatus access roads, addresses and fire-protection equipment shall be in accordance with Section 901.4.

901.4.2 Fire apparatus access roads. When required by the chief, approved signs or other approved notices shall be provided and maintained for fire apparatus access roads to identify such roads and prohibit the obstruction thereof or both.

901.4.3 Fire-protection equipment and fire hydrants. Fire-protection equipment and fire hydrants shall be clearly identified in an approved manner to prevent obstruction by parking and other obstructions.

When required by the chief, hydrant locations shall be identified by the installation of reflective markers.

See also Section 1001.7.

901.4.4 Premises identification. Approved numbers or addresses shall be provided for all new and existing buildings in such a position as to be plainly visible and legible from the street or road fronting the property.

901.4.5 Street or road signs. When required by the chief, streets and roads shall be identified with approved signs.

901.5 Obstruction and Control of Fire Apparatus Access Roads and Fire-protection Equipment. See Sections 902.2.4 and 1001.7.

901.6 Fire Protection in Recreational Vehicle, Mobile Home and Manufactured Housing Parks, Sales Lots and Storage Lots. Recreational vehicle, mobile home and manufactured housing parks, sales lots and storage lots shall provide and maintain fire hydrants and access roads in accordance with Sections 902 and 903.

> **EXCEPTION:** Recreational vehicle parks located in remote areas shall be provided with protection and access roadways as required by the chief.

SECTION 902 — FIRE DEPARTMENT ACCESS

902.1 General. Fire department access roads shall be provided and maintained in accordance with Sections 901 and 902.

902.2 Fire Apparatus Access Roads.

902.2.1 Required access. Fire apparatus access roads shall be provided in accordance with Sections 901 and 902.2 for every facility, building or portion of a building hereafter constructed or moved into or within the jurisdiction when any portion of the facility or any portion of an exterior wall of the first story of the building is located more than 150 feet (45 720 mm) from fire apparatus access as measured by an approved route around the exterior of the building or facility. See also Section 902.3 for personnel access to buildings.

> **EXCEPTIONS:** 1. When buildings are completely protected with an approved automatic fire sprinkler system, the provisions of Sections 902.2.1 and 902.2.2 may be modified by the chief.
>
> 2. When access roads cannot be installed due to location on property, topography, waterways, nonnegotiable grades or other similar conditions, the chief is authorized to require additional fire protection as specified in Section 1001.9.
>
> 3. When there are not more than two Group R, Division 3, or Group U Occupancies, the requirements of Sections 902.2.1 and 902.2.2 may be modified by the chief.

More than one fire apparatus road shall be provided when it is determined by the chief that access by a single road might be impaired by vehicle congestion, condition of terrain, climatic conditions or other factors that could limit access.

For high-piled combustible storage, see Section 8102.6.1.

For required access during construction, alteration or demolition of a building, see Section 8704.2.

902.2.2 Specifications.

902.2.2.1 Dimensions. Fire apparatus access roads shall have an unobstructed width of not less than 20 feet (6096 mm) and an unobstructed vertical clearance of not less than 13 feet 6 inches (4115 mm).

> **EXCEPTION:** Vertical clearance may be reduced, provided such reduction does not impair access by fire apparatus and approved signs are installed and maintained indicating the established vertical clearance when approved.

Vertical clearances or widths shall be increased when, in the opinion of the chief, vertical clearances or widths are not adequate to provide fire apparatus access.

902.2.2.2 Surface. Fire apparatus access roads shall be designed and maintained to support the imposed loads of fire apparatus and shall be provided with a surface so as to provide all-weather driving capabilities.

902.2.2.3 Turning radius. The turning radius of a fire apparatus access road shall be as approved.

902.2.2.4 Dead ends. Dead-end fire apparatus access roads in excess of 150 feet (45 720 mm) in length shall be provided with approved provisions for the turning around of fire apparatus.

902.2.2.5 Bridges. When a bridge is required to be used as part of a fire apparatus access road, it shall be constructed and maintained in accordance with nationally recognized standards. See Article 90, Standard a.1.1. The bridge shall be designed for a live load sufficient to carry the imposed loads of fire apparatus.

Vehicle load limits shall be posted at both entrances to bridges when required by the chief.

902.2.2.6 Grade. The gradient for a fire apparatus access road shall not exceed the maximum approved.

902.2.3 Marking. See Section 901.4.

902.2.4 Obstruction and control of fire apparatus access.

902.2.4.1 General. The required width of a fire apparatus access road shall not be obstructed in any manner, including parking of vehicles. Minimum required widths and clearances established under Section 902.2.2.1 shall be maintained at all times.

Entrances to roads, trails or other accessways which have been closed with gates and barriers in accordance with Section 902.2.4.2 shall not be obstructed by parked vehicles.

902.2.4.2 Closure of accessways. The chief is authorized to require the installation and maintenance of gates or other approved barricades across roads, trails or other accessways, not including public streets, alleys or highways.

When required, gates and barricades shall be secured in an approved manner. Roads, trails and other accessways which have been closed and obstructed in the manner prescribed by Section 902.2.4.2 shall not be trespassed upon or used unless authorized by the owner and the chief.

EXCEPTION: Public officers acting within their scope of duty.

Locks, gates, doors, barricades, chains, enclosures, signs, tags or seals which have been installed by the fire department or by its order or under its control shall not be removed, unlocked, destroyed, tampered with or otherwise molested in any manner.

EXCEPTION: When authorized by the chief or performed by public officers acting within their scope of duty.

902.3 Access to Building Openings.

902.3.1 Required access. Exterior doors and openings required by this code or the Building Code shall be maintained readily accessible for emergency access by the fire department.

An approved access walkway leading from fire apparatus access roads to exterior openings required by this code or the Building Code shall be provided when required by the chief.

902.3.2 Maintenance of exterior doors and openings. Exterior doors or their function shall not be eliminated without prior approval by the chief. Exterior doors which have been rendered nonfunctional and which retain a functional door exterior appearance shall have a sign affixed to the exterior side of such door stating THIS DOOR BLOCKED. The sign shall consist of letters having principal stroke of not less than $^3/_4$ inch (19.1 mm) wide and at least 6 inches (152.4 mm) high on a contrasting background. Required fire department access doors shall not be obstructed or eliminated. See Section 1207 for exit and exit-access doors.

For access doors for high-piled combustible storage, see Section 8102.6.2.

902.3.3 Shaftway marking. Exterior windows in buildings used for manufacturing or for storage purposes which open directly on shaftways or other vertical means of communication between two or more floors shall be plainly marked with the word SHAFTWAY in red letters at least 6 inches (152.4 mm) high on a white background. Warning signs shall be easily discernible from the outside of the building. Door and window openings on such shaftways from the interior of the building shall be similarly marked with the word SHAFTWAY in a manner which is easily visible to anyone approaching the shaftway from the interior of the building, unless the construction of the partition surrounding the shaftway is of such distinctive nature as to make its purpose evident at a glance.

902.4 Key Boxes. When access to or within a structure or an area is unduly difficult because of secured openings or where immediate access is necessary for life-saving or firefighting purposes, the chief is authorized to require a key box to be installed in an accessible location. The key box shall be of an approved type and shall contain keys to gain necessary access as required by the chief.

SECTION 903 — WATER SUPPLIES AND FIRE HYDRANTS

903.1 General. Water supplies and fire hydrants shall be in accordance with Sections 901 and 903.

903.2 Required Water Supply for Fire Protection. An approved water supply capable of supplying the required fire flow for fire protection shall be provided to all premises upon which facilities, buildings or portions of buildings are hereafter constructed or moved into or within the jurisdiction. When any portion of the facility or building protected is in excess of 150 feet (45 720 mm) from a water supply on a public street, as measured by an approved route around the exterior of the facility or building, on-site fire hydrants and mains capable of supplying the required fire flow shall be provided when required by the chief. See Section 903.4.

903.3 Type of Water Supply. Water supply is allowed to consist of reservoirs, pressure tanks, elevated tanks, water mains or other fixed systems capable of providing the required fire flow. In setting the requirements for fire flow, the chief may be guided by Appendix III-A.

903.4 Fire Hydrant Systems.

903.4.1 General.

903.4.1.1 Applicability. Fire hydrant systems and fire hydrants shall be in accordance with Section 903.4.

903.4.1.2 Testing and maintenance. Fire hydrant systems shall be subject to such periodic tests as required by the chief. Fire hydrant systems shall be maintained in an operative condition at all times and shall be repaired where defective. Additions, repairs, alterations and servicing shall be in accordance with approved standards.

Standard for

Outside Protection

NFPA 24—1977

1977 Edition of NFPA 24

This edition of the Standard for Outside Protection incorporates revisions adopted by the National Fire Protection Association at its 1977 Annual Meeting, in Washington, D.C., May 19, 1977, on recommendation of the Committee on Standpipes and Outside Protection. It supersedes the edition of 1973 and all prior editions. Changes, other than editorial, are denoted by a vertical line in the margin of the pages in which they appear.

Chapter 4 Hydrants

4-1* General.

4-1.1 Hydrants shall be of approved type and have not less an a six-inch connection with the mains. A valve shall be installed the hydrant connection. The number, size and arrangement of itlets, the size of main valve opening, and the size of barrel shall be itable for the protection to be provided and shall be approved by e authority having jurisdiction. Independent gate valves on 2½- ch outlets may be used. (*See Chapter 5.*)

4-1.2 Hydrant outlet threads shall conform to the American ational Fire Hose Connection Screw Thread, as specified in NFPA 4, *Screw Threads and Gaskets for Fire Hose Connections.* (*See Appendix*)

xception No. 1: Where local hose coupling threads do not conform to the merican National Fire Hose Connection Screw Thread, the authority having risdiction shall designate the threads to be used.

xception No. 2: Where local hose couplings are of a type without threads, the thority having jurisdiction shall designate the type of outlet to be used.

4-2 Number and Location.

4-2.1 A sufficient number of hydrants shall be installed to pro- de two streams for every part of the interior of each building not vered by standpipe protection and to provide hose stream pro- ction for every exterior part of each building by the use of the ngths of hose normally attached to the hydrants. There shall be fficient hydrants to concentrate the required fire flow about any nportant building with no hose line exceeding 500 feet (152.5m) in ngth.

NOTE: Public hydrants when available on an acceptable public water system may be considered to comply with this requirement.

4-2.2 For average conditions, hydrants shall be placed at least) feet (12.2m) from the buildings protected.

xception: Where it is impossible to place them at this distance, they may be cated nearer, provided they are set in locations where the possibility of injury falling walls is small, and from which men are not likely to be driven by moke or heat. Usually in crowded mill yards, they can be placed beside low buildings, near brick stair towers, or at angles formed by substantial brick walls which are not likely to fall.

4-2.3 Hydrants shall not be placed near retaining walls where there is danger of frost through the walls.

4-3 Installation and Maintenance.

4-3.1 Hydrants shall be set on flat stones or concrete slabs and if necessary, shall be provided with sufficient small stones (or equivalent) placed about the drain to ensure quick drainage.

4-3.2 Where soil is of such a nature that the hydrants will not drain properly with the arrangement specified in 4-3.1, or ground water stands at levels above that of the drain, the hydrant drain shall be plugged at the time of installation. If drain is plugged, hydrants in service in cold climates shall be pumped out after usage. Such hydrants shall be marked to indicate the need for pumping out after usage.

4-3.3 In setting hydrants, due regard should be given to final grade line. The center of a hose outlet shall be not less than 12 inches above the floor of a hose house or above grade.

4-3.4 Hydrants shall be fastened to piping by standard clamps or be properly anchored. (*See Fig. A-8-6.2-7.*)

4-3.5 Hydrants shall be protected if subject to mechanical damage.

4-3.6 Hydrants shall be tested at least annually for proper functioning in accordance with the requirements of the authority having jurisdiction.

Standard for the Installation of

Private Fire Service Mains and Their Appurtenances

1995 Edition

This edition of NFPA 24, *Standard for the Installation of Private Fire Service Mains and Their Appurtenances*, was prepared by the Technical Committee on Private Water Supply Piping Systems and acted on by the National Fire Protection Association, Inc., at its Annual Meeting held May 22-25, 1995, in Denver, CO. It was issued by the Standards Council on July 21, 1995, with an effective date of August 11, 1995, and supersedes all previous editions.

This edition of NFPA 24 was approved as an American National Standard on August 11, 1995.

Changes other than editorial are indicated by a vertical rule in the margin of the pages on which they appear. These lines are included as an aid to the user in identifying changes from the previous edition.

Chapter 4 Hydrants

4-1* General.

4-1.1 Hydrants shall be of approved type and have not less than a 6-in. (152-mm) diameter connection with the mains. A valve shall be installed in the hydrant connection. The number, size, and arrangement of outlets, the size of the main valve opening, and the size of the barrel shall be suitable for the protection to be provided and shall be approved by the authority having jurisdiction. Independent gate valves on 2½-in. (64-mm) outlets are permitted. (*See Chapter 5.*)

4-1.2 Hydrant outlet threads shall have the NH standard external threads for the size outlet(s) supplied as specified in NFPA 1963, *Standard for Fire Hose Connections.*

Exception: Where local fire department connections do not conform to NFPA 1963, Standard for Fire Hose Connections, the authority having jurisdiction shall designate the connection to be used.

4-1.3* Hydrants on private service mains shall not be equipped with pumper outlets unless the calculated demand for large hose (3.5 in. and larger) is added to the attack hose and sprinkler system demands in determining the total demand on the fire protection water supply.

4-2 Number and Location.

4-2.1* Hydrants shall be provided in sufficient number and be located in a manner that will enable the needed fire flow to be delivered through hose lines to all exterior sides of any important structure. Hydrants shall be spaced in accordance with the authority having jurisdiction. Public hydrants are recognized as meeting all or part of the above requirements.

4-2.2* For average conditions, hydrants shall be placed at least 40 ft (12.2 m) from the buildings protected.

Exception: When hydrants cannot be placed at this distance, they shall be permitted to be located closer, or wall hydrants used (see Figure A-4-2.2), provided they are set in locations by blank walls where the possibility of injury by falling walls is unlikely and from which people are not likely to be driven by smoke or heat. Usually, in crowded plant yards, they can be placed beside low buildings, near brick stair towers or at angles formed by substantial brick walls that are not likely to fall.

4-2.3 Hydrants shall not be placed near retaining walls where there is danger of frost through the walls.

4-3 Installation and Maintenance.

4-3.1 Hydrants shall be set on flat stones or concrete slabs and, if necessary, shall be provided with sufficient small stones (or equivalent) placed about the drain to ensure quick drainage.

4-3.2 Where soil is of such a nature that the hydrants will not drain properly with the arrangement specified in 4-3.1, or ground water stands at levels above that of the drain, the hydrant drain shall be plugged at the time of installation. If the drain is plugged, hydrants in service in cold climates shall be pumped out after usage. Such hydrants shall be marked to indicate the need for pumping out after usage.

4-3.3* The center of a hose outlet shall be not less than 18 in. (457 mm) above final grade, or when located in a hose house, 12 in. (305 mm) above the floor.

4-3.4 Hydrants shall be fastened to piping by standard clamps or be properly anchored.

4-3.5 Hydrants shall be protected if subject to mechanical damage. The means of protection shall be arranged in a manner that will not interfere with the connection to, or operation of, hydrants.

4-3.6* To ensure proper functioning, wet barrel hydrants shall be tested at least annually, and dry barrel hydrants tested semiannually in the early spring and fall, in accordance with the requirements of the authority having jurisdiction.

4-3.7 Check valves, detector check valves, back flow prevention valves, and similar appurtenances shall not be installed in the service stub between a fire hydrant and private water supply piping.

TRANSCRIPT OF TESTIMONY

MOBILEHOME PARK FIRE HYDRANT SAFETY

FEBRUARY 4, 2000

GARDEN GROVE, CALIFORNIA

SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON MOBILE AND MANUFACTURED HOMES

Mobilehome Park Fire Hydrant Safety

Garden Grove, California
February 4, 2000

Senator Joseph Dunn, Chair

SENATOR JOSEPH DUNN: If we can get everybody to take their seats and we'll get going. We're almost on time. How do you like that? It'll be the first one of our meetings.

Good morning, everybody.

THE AUDIENCE: Good morning.

SENATOR DUNN: Feels like we're in class this morning, doesn't it? (Laughter)

I want to welcome everyone. I think some of you had advised me this morning this is our sixth hearing on Mobile and Manufactured Home issues over the past approximately one year. This morning we're going to address perhaps one of the most difficult, obviously because of the recent tragedy that had occurred in Compton, but we'll get to that in just a minute.

I'm not going to say very many comments this morning. I know that's good news for everybody. There is a very extensive briefing paper that John prepared that is over on the table. I'm sure most of you have it. If you don't,

please get it. It gives a tremendous background of all the complexities associated with the issue of fire safety and our mobilehome parks throughout the State of California.

I want to set a few ground rules here before we get into some of the testimony. When we call the witnesses, we're going to call a few at a time. We want you to state your name. You have to speak right into the microphone, and I'll remind you, don't worry, so that everybody can hear you. We want to keep all of the comments to three to five minutes, no more than that so that we can stay on track. I want everyone to stay focused today as well. We know there are many issues to address with respect to mobilehome park residency. Again, we're just zeroing in on the fire safety issues this morning, no other issue.

If you have written testimony, you can hand it to the Sergeant. It will be made part of the record. You don't need to read written testimony if you have it prepared. So if you do have that and want to submit it, we will make it part of the record.

A few introductions really quickly, as most of your know, I'm Senator Joe Dunn. Welcome to the 34th Senate District. We are having this hearing in the 34th Senate District today. Next to me is an individual who is probably the most knowledgeable individual on the issues relating to mobilehome park residency. That, of course, is the Committee Consultant, John Tennyson, right next to me.

We expect a few other members to come – Assemblymember Alan Lowenthal we expect to be here, Assemblymember Lou Correa we expect to be here. I think I just saw that Jay is here.

Jay, is Lou going to be here?

MR. JAY BARKMAN: No, his wife had a baby yesterday.

SENATOR DUNN: Ah, there we go. We'll accept that excuse. Assemblymember Correa was expecting their fourth child and, according to

Jay, he just arrived yesterday so we would expect that Lou would not be here. In fact, if he does come, we're going to send him right back home.

We expect Senator Richard Alarcon to be here as well. So please excuse them as they wander in, most of them coming from the Los Angeles area, probably facing the traffic along the way.

A few staff individuals, Jay Barkman who is right over there. Jay, from Assemblymember Lou Correa's office. And you have Jackie with you as well? There's Jackie, also from Lou Correa's office. We also have Chuck from Senator Betty Karnette's office sitting in the back as well.

Carina, any other staff we have from these other offices?

CARINA FRANCK: No, not yet.

SENATOR DUNN: Also, I want to introduce our two Sergeants, Leroy and John. They will be watching over all of us today. If there's any questions, concerns, any submissions you have, documents and so forth, please give it to the sergeants as well.

Another introduction I want to make real quickly, and that's Deputy Secretary for Housing, who happens to come right here from Orange County, and that is Pat Neal right there.

All right. As I made mention earlier, before I get into that, I also want to extend a big thank you to the City of Garden Grove for, once again, providing us with their hospitality here, for the room and for the coffee this morning. I greatly thank you, to the City of Garden Grove.

Okay. Real quickly, I think everyone in this room knows we had a tragedy that occurred in December of last year, in the City of Compton, in which a fire, unfortunately, took some lives. There was a discovery at that time of the difficulty relating to fire protection in mobilehome parks. The hearing this morning is not an attempt to isolate the cause or point blame with respect to the Compton incident. That is being taken care of by others involved with that particular tragedy. We will address that particular

tragedy briefly this morning. But really our focus is how extensive a problem we have, if any, with respect to fire protection in our mobilehome parks throughout the State of California, and we have over 5,000 parks in the State of California.

Moving quickly to the issue of, if we have a problem, how we can resolve the problem of adequate fire protection in our mobilehome parks, a very difficult one? Obviously, to resolve the issue, it's going to cost dollars, and we need a source and how we can do that?

Our focus is, as everybody knows who dealt with John and I through the past year, if we in fact find that there is a problem that needs a solution, that we would like a solution to be arrived at cooperatively with all groups, individuals, and persons that have involvement with mobilehome parks throughout the State of California. We'd like to do this in a way that allows everyone to participate and together, hopefully, we can find the best solution.

So without anything further, John, any comments you want to add?

Without anything further, let's start moving forward. I'll call up the first panel, that'll be the first three. They will be Sister Maribeth Larkin from our Lady of Victory Church in Compton, Olivia Cruz from the El Rancho Park in Compton, and Carmen -- and pardon me if I pronounce this incorrectly -- Camacho, also of El Rancho Park in Compton.

Good morning, Sister. Did you want to make a few comments?

SISTER MARIBETH LARKIN: Yes.

SENATOR DUNN: All right. Please.

SISTER LARKIN: Good morning, Senator.

SENATOR DUNN: I will always interrupt everyone.

Everybody can hear the Sister? Okay. Just raise your hand in the back. If you can't, then I'll make sure they speak into the mike.

SISTER LARKIN: Okay. Again, my name is Sister Maribeth Larkin. I am with Our Lady of Victory Church in Compton. And with me today are

two of the residents of El Rancho Park in Compton, Olivia Cruz and Carmen Camacho, and they're both going to speak from the perspective of the residents, but I'd also like to mention that present here today are two other residents of El Rancho – Carlos Romero and Julia Taderos and also Jean Dixon from the Peter Pan Mobilehome Park in Compton. All of us are here because of the event of the fire on December 19, which has reminded everybody that it is important that we work together to solve some of the critical problems that exist in those parks. The problems are a daily threat to the life and security of people living in those parks and we recognize that there's a role for the residents, the community at large, including churches like ourselves, as well as public officials at all levels, city and state. So we're happy to begin the conversation. That needs to continue until we make some serious changes in the situation.

Thank you very much.

SENATOR DUNN: Thank you.

MS. CARMEN CAMACHO: My name is Carmen Camacho and I live in the mobilehomes in...

SENATOR DUNN: Carmen, right into the microphone.

MS. CAMACHO: Okay. I live in El Rancho Park and I'm just here to give you a little bit of what happened that day. The first thing that started, that everybody started getting scared, when one of the gas tanks exploded and the people were running all around trying to save some of their few things to move away, right away, that day. And then actually, most of the people, right now, they're kind of scared because actually we don't know if we still have any water. We don't know what's going to happen, even today, even tomorrow, but we're here to see if we can be able to at least secure that we have water, anything that we could be helped with, to finish a fire, I mean to be there when something happens in case of emergency.

Another thing, there's a lot of things that need to be done and I just want to thank the Sister here that brought us here to this meeting, and I want to thank Mr. Mura and Mr. Owada, from the city, that's been helping us out too. As soon as it started, since the fire started too, they've been helping us with a lot of things. And another thing I wanted to conclude is that right now I'm a little shaky because actually I'm speaking for the whole community. So I'm here being honest that I hope something has to be done from now on.

Thank you.

SENATOR DUNN: And you're doing a very good job.

MS. CAMACHO: Thank you.

SENATOR DUNN: Olivia, before you start, it is my understanding Olivia does not speak English. She will give her comments in Spanish but we will then provide a translation for everyone.

Olivia.

MS. OLIVIA CRUZ: Thank you. My name is Olivia Cruz. Nosotros venimos representando a la comunidad del Rancho MH Park y estamos aquí con un propósito de que seamos oídos y se nos cumplan cada una de nuestras necesidades. Como ustedes lo saben, las pérdidas humanas que hubo por falta quizás de comunicación con el dueño pero dejemos ahora eso atrás. Estamos viviendo lo presente y andamos luchando con el propósito que seamos tratados como personas no como animales. Estamos cansados de que haya mucha discriminación y por lo tanto les pedimos que nos ayuden. No estamos de acuerdo que la manager tome medidas de luz, agua y gas. Queremos personas capacitadas para este equipo de trabajo y les pedimos en nombre de toda la comunidad del mobile home que sea reemplazada la manager. Hay muchas irregularidades en el parque y nosotros tenemos pruebas que cuando ustedes las pidan nosotros se las presentaremos. Se les entregaron los extinguidores para que nos lo distribuyeran a cada persona no

se ha hecho eso. En las entradas los fans estuvieron por mucho tiempo sin servicio. Seguridad no tenemos. Queremos que nos den protección es lo que nosotros les pedimos para toda nuestra comunidad de 165 unidades a nombre de todas las personas que estamos nosotros representando se los pedimos. Muchas gracias por su atención que nos han dado y nos han brindado y esperemos que nos ayuden porque en realidad creo yo que nosotros podemos vivir nuestros hijos mucho mejor. Muchas gracias y muy amable. No tenemos con que palabras decirle querer mucho con lo que nos han ayudado y esperemos que por el bien de todos nosotros, muchas gracias.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF OLIVIA CRUZ: Thank you. My name is Olivia Cruz. We are here representing the community of Rancho MH Park, and we are here with a purpose: To be heard and for you to help us accomplish each of our needs.

As you must be aware already, there was human loss due to the lack of communication with the owner, but let's set this issue aside for a moment.

We are living the present and we are fighting with the purpose to be treated as human beings and not as animals. We are tired of being discriminated against, and consequently we're asking for your help. We are not in agreement that the manager take steps for the light, water, and gas. We want knowledgeable people for this type of work, and we asked in the name of the mobilehome community that the manager should be replaced. There are many irregularities in the park, and we have evidence to prove it. If you'd like, we can provide you with them any time you wish.

The fire extinguishers were provided for distribution, but we still have yet to receive them. At the entrance, all the fans were out of service for a long period of time. We don't have security. We would like to ensure we will be protected. That's why we're making this request in the name of our community of 165 units, which we're here to represent.

Thank you very much for the attention you've given us. We really hope that you can help us and our children improve our quality of living. Thank you for your kindness. We don't have words to express our gratitude for all the help you have given us in behalf of our well being.

Thank you very much.

SENATOR DUNN: Carmen, right into the microphone, if you would.

MS. CAMACHO: We're here from the community. We're representing the whole community park. We're here because there's a lot of rules that has to be done.

One of the main things, the first things is to replace one of the managers. And another thing, there's being considered that we are supposed to have fire extinguishers, smoke alarms. That hasn't been done. We haven't gotten it yet. Everything has been done right now since we started these meetings. But we need, as a community, we need a little bit more help. We need a park for the kids in the community so they can play.

Another thing, actually, we don't want the manager to take over, tape measurements about the gas and the water, even the electric. We want somebody else being professional that could go in and take measurements from the meter.

Another thing, there's a lot of things from the manager that we've seen that she's kind of racist so we're kind of against that. If you could help us just try to get another manager or somebody else that could be able to take over and follow the rules as they are supposed to be because there's a lot of damaged things that's supposed to be done in that community.

Please help us. We're pleading with you to at least understand us, now that this tragedy happened. So thank you for coming and listening to us. There's a lot of problems that we have from the community.

Thank you.

SENATOR DUNN: Thank you.

Sister, Carmen, I want to thank you very, very much.

MS. CAMACHO: All right. Thank you.

SENATOR DUNN: I'm going to bring up our next three witnesses – Don Hunter, Harold Shone, and Leonard Williams.

We'll just go in the order that I've got them, and so, Don, you're up first. And again, right into the microphone.

MR. DON HUNTER: Is this all right?

SENATOR DUNN: Everybody can hear? Yes.

MR. HUNTER: Thank you very much. Since I actually have worn three hats, I've lived in a mobilehome park for 38 years, I would prefer to call and it should be correctly called "manufactured community, housing community". Secondly, I served on a fire department for many years, was an inspector for a number of years, and part of that, we inspected mobilehome parks. So can I talk three times as long? (Laughter)

SENATOR DUNN: Motion rejected. (Laughter)

MR. HUNTER: All right. I'm going to touch very lightly on three subjects right here because there are other experts here, particularly the fire department, so I am going to bow mostly to them.

One of the things that I would like you people to remember, if you go away from here not remembering anything else, and I hope you remember a lot, in 1976, the federal government, through urban development, took over and enforced the construction of manufactured housing. There has been no mobilehomes manufactured since that date on, so let us really be truthful about this and call it as it is. It's manufactured housing. We live in manufactured housing communities.

Another thing I'd like to state right here, I've lived in mobilehome parks for 38 years. I've finally become a success in America. My income was so low and I'm a senior citizen. I now live in senior citizen housing. But my heart still goes out. I'm concerned about the mobilehome people. I'm co-

founder with John Sisker of the Mobilehome Manufactured Housing Web site, and some of you, I've passed out some brochures. It's an informational Web site. We cover a lot of subjects on there for information and there's a lot more to come, particularly on this situation here we have not covered and we'll be working with you closely on that and we'll publicize that over our Web site, Senator Dunn.

The other thing that I would like to touch on, inspecting, when I used to inspect mobilehome parks when I was an inspector, the parks or the housing communities really were well-maintained. We didn't have too many, just a few problems or violations. There's a reason for this. Mobilehome people are residents, manufactured housing residents. They're very conscientious. I used to go and be invited to speak as a fire prevention officer at many of their functions. I always enjoyed it because they fed me too and firemen like to eat. But, however, one of the biggest violations under Title 19, Fire Code, the section I always call good housekeeping, and I had cited many places for that, accumulation of rubbish, combustible materials. Fortunately, in a majority of the manufactured housing communities, there's no problem. They're good housekeepers, so we don't have that hazard there.

Now a manufactured house can have drywall construction, which is a fire retardant, as well as the fire alarms. That's probably one of the first manufactured houses, or mobilehomes, as it was then, to put in a smoke detector. I was always concerned about older homes because they had the wood paneling and other factors so they were a hazard and could burn. This has been improved on that basis.

But what is lacking considerably is adequate fire protection and fire suppression in manufactured housing communities. This has always concerned me. I've wrote reams of letters, complaints, and so forth on it to different agencies. Now, unfortunately, three people had to die before it seems to be taken very seriously. In the fire department, we had a similar

situation at the time, inadequate hydrants, water pressure, volume. We lost 38 homes in Benicia Hills, very frustrating because the fireman was standing there with a hose that was like a wet noodle.

SENATOR DUNN: When was that?

MR. HUNTER: About 15 years ago or longer. I forget.

Also, in the same situation, in Palm Springs, on Bob Hope Drive, there were some developers building new construction there. There were hydrants in; there were water mains in but they weren't charged. There was no water. Unfortunately, a fire started there. Thousands, millions of dollars were lost; fortunately, no lives because things were being built and nobody was living there. There was no water. Hydrants, no water.

The fire department cannot function without that necessary ingredient. There's three things for burning that's called a fire triangle. One is oxygen, the other is heat and fuel. Now if you cannot remove the fuel --

SENATOR DUNN: I just want you to focus because time is running.

MR. HUNTER: -- you'll have to have some water to put it out with. This seems be to the problem. Most of the manufactured housing, mobilehome parks, trailer parks, whatever you choose to name them, are outdated; the water lines in them are inadequate. The park I used to live in had a two-inch main in there going to 118 spaces. Water pressure in the morning, it wasn't enough pressure, enough volume of water for me to take a shower. I'd have to take a shower late in the evening. If we'd had a fire there, it would have been another catastrophe.

The other thing I want to emphasize right here and then I'm going to shut up, mobilehomes are being permitted, manufactured housing, to be built too close together. It used to be, when I first moved into them, there was three feet to the property line for each one. That's six feet in between from the furthest extrusion. Now there are parks, because they have built larger and larger manufactured housing, they're moving in there. I'm not a broad-

shouldered man and I have a difficulty walking in between. My shoulders would rub. The fire department can sure up the size of the hazard on that.

Thank you so very much.

SENATOR DUNN: Thank you.

Before Harold, first of all, don't use that mike. That belongs to the media. You need to use the other mike. There you go. They will hear you very well if you speak directly into that one but the rest of us won't.

Before you go on, I want to make a quick introduction, an individual I said would be here in a few short minutes, that's Assemblymember Alan Lowenthal from the Long Beach area.

Alan, before we continue, any brief comments you'd like to make?

ASSEMBLYMAN ALAN LOWENTHAL: Well, thank you, Senator, for holding the Mobilehome Park hearing. Yesterday, I spent the afternoon at El Rancho Mobilehome Park in the City of Compton. It was a very positive experience. I did not go to point fingers in any way. But to really understand what took place and to look at how the state, if there are any flaws in our laws, on how we might modify what our existing laws are. I'm just really glad to be here and listen to the testimony and participate as much as possible.

SENATOR DUNN: Thank you for being here.

Harold.

MR. HAROLD SHONE: My name is Harold Shone from Fernwood Mobilehome Park. And what I have to say, I'm going to say, so this it. I've been living in a mobilehome park for 30 years. Before, when we first moved in there, the fire department used to come in once a year and clean out our hydrant. Now it's been nine years, nine years, gentlemen, since they've been in there. We alerted the fire department, me and Kevin next to me, to question them. They told us we'd have to wait and talk to the chief. I think it was a captain. But he told us that they cannot go into a park and do that

any more because, if they damage the hydrant, then the fire department will have to pay for it. That's kind of stupid, to my knowledge.

So now they did have a fire in there in 1976. Well, one of our mobilehomes burnt down to the ground. Now what happened there was at 3 o'clock in the morning it was smoking so most of us, we all get together and we all went out. But in between time, the fire engine come in. He had to break the gate in the back to get in. All the rest of them were locked up and we ask why. And you know what the answer is? None of your business. Sir, you call this right? I don't. That's why I'm here today to speak to let you know that something's got to be done about this situation. People panic. What are we going to do? The handicapped can't get out. What are you going to do? If they don't see you out there, it's too late. I don't look at it that way.

Thank you very much.

SENATOR DUNN: Thank you.

Get right into the microphone.

MR. LEONARD WILLIAMS: Yes. My name is Leonard Williams. I live in Fernwood Mobilehome Park. Harry's my neighbor there. We went over to the fire department together and talked with either a lieutenant or a chief that was in charge of the staff. And what Harry said was true. They told us that they don't do those clean outs any more on account of liability. If the fire hydrant or something went wrong, the fire department would be liable for fixing it. Now that's probably true. I don't know. But later, I filed a complaint with HUD with three safety items, I considered them safety items. The only one I plan to discuss here is fire hazards.

SENATOR DUNN: Again, right into the mike.

MR. WILLIAMS: They sent an inspector out there in January. Funny, the park knew they was coming a day ahead of time because the director of the parks and the manager was there. I asked to be notified of when they were coming. I was not notified. Now this man looked at a few

things and went and sat in the manager's office and took her word for everything. If he would have opened his eyes and looked around, he would have seen the violations I had are still there.

Now these fire hydrants, they claimed they checked them two months earlier. But you can go around to those painted yellow fire hydrants. If you open up the fire hydrants, you have to put a wrench on them. Most of the fire hydrants in that park have never had a wrench put on them. She claims that they took a funnel, cracked the fire hydrants, and made sure water was coming and closed it. It's my understanding, the reason for flushing the fire hydrants, I know of two reasons – there are probably more – that one of the reasons is to flush the rust out; the second is to make sure that the fire hydrant works. But if they don't check them, how do they know?

I have a suggestion on what you can write into the law. Now you can take it for what it is. But I would say that the fire hydrants should be checked by whatever municipality is there. And if the fire hydrants break or something's wrong with it, that charge will be put back to the park owner. And whatever it costs for the fire department to check these fire hydrants, that ought to be billed back to the park owner. Now I realize that may raise the rents and stuff like that but I think safety is more important.

That's it. (Applause)

SENATOR DUNN: Thank you.

I've got one more individual resident that had signed up ahead, and so why don't we bring that individual up, and then we'll go to the representatives of the resident organization.

Ken Benedict. Is Ken here? Oh, there you are.

MR. KEN BENEDICT: ...(gap in tape)...

MR. STEVE GULLAGE: Thank you, Senator Dunn and gentlemen, for bringing this fire safety issue to this open forum. It's a very serious

problem that has existed apparently for sometime and needed this sad disaster to make the public aware of it.

My name is Steve Gullage. I'm the state President of the Golden State Manufactured Homeowners League.

I recently attended a homeowners meeting at a mobilehome park in the City of Orange as the speaker, representing GSMOL, and one of the speakers at the time was a fire captain from a station in Orange, Captain Doug Weeks. Now Captain Weeks was there to speak on fire prevention and mobilehomes and mobilehome parks and which, of course, is of major concern for both the firefighters and the homeowners, given the fact that mobilehomes can be entirely consumed by fire in as little as, I understand, four to seven minutes. It was revealed during Captain Weeks' very informative talk – incidentally, that talk was attended by over 150 mobilehome owners – that the park, the very park in which the meeting was being held, Park Royale, could not provide adequate water pressure at their hydrants in the park, and the fire department would have to run over 1,000 feet of line from a hydrant on Rampart Street if a fire broke out in that park.

Now this was an eye opener, not only to me, but to the homeowners that were sitting in that audience. They lived there. They are the victims of a deteriorated and unsafe condition that exists in that park. I asked the captain if this was an isolated case; and he stated, that because of the size of the original pipes which are approximately 2.5 inches and neglected, corrosive buildup over the years, that most, if not all the parks in the City of Orange, would require lines to be run from hydrants outside of the park in the event of a fire, more victims of a deteriorated and unsafe condition.

Now because of the recent tragedy in Compton, and this is a very serious matter that has to be addressed immediately, providing a safe environment to the homeowners who are leasing the space on which to place their home and which to reside is the responsibility of the park owner to

whom the homeowner pays the land-use fee. For a homeowner to suddenly find that a fire-fighting system on which their very lives could depend is inadequate through failure to maintain, failure to properly upgrade, or just plain sheer neglect is and should not be acceptable.

I know from conversations that I have had with the fire department personnel that the condition of the hydrants in mobilehome parks and the adequacy of the pipes supplying water to those hydrants is known to those firefighters and is of enough concern that they just hook up to outside hydrants when they get a call involving a fire in many of these mobilehome parks or they bring a pumper if one is available.

Now I am sure that any system in any mobile home park that has been tested for pressure and water volume by a city fire department and found to be inadequate has been reported to that park management. And for management to allow that condition to continue to exist without concern for the residents in that park and the possible consequences as a result of that unconcern is unconscionable. And to have that condition exist because of management's failure to even have the system inspected and tested is bordering on criminal.

Homeowners pay through the land-use fees they pay every month for adequate fire protection in the form of properly maintained, upgraded, and operational water hydrants throughout the park to assure that every effort is being taken that disasters such as recently occurred in Compton will be minimized or eliminated. And even though many of these systems were installed when the parks were first built some years ago, the obligation and the duty lies with the park owners to upgrade and maintain the system as necessary. This is park maintenance. There's no ifs, ands, or buts.

With the safety of approximately 1 million California mobilehome residents in jeopardy in those parks that do not meet the necessary requirements for fire protection, it is the opinion of the Golden State

Manufactured Homeowners League that state legislation may be the only answer to bring the non-compliant park owner to realize his obligation and duty to the safety of the homeowner and his family residing in this park. And we cannot stand by and wait for the next disaster. We owe it to the unsuspecting homeowner who needs the protection he is paying for and is not getting. We don't have a lot of time. As a matter of fact, the time it took for me to bring this message to you a doublewide mobilehome could have been entirely consumed by fire. And without adequate fire protection in the park, adjoining homes would now be in the process of being destroyed.

We need stronger legislation to right this wrong. We need strong legislation to force hydrant inspection and upgrade as a mandatory obligation of the park owner under the fees he has been charging and not using all these years. We must provide the homeowner the protection he's been paying for and is entitled to, that the system's been properly maintained and upgraded as necessary. Using the land-use fees provided by the homeowner, there would be no problem today. But by allowing the systems to be neglected and not upgraded as needed, there will have to be a major, financial outlay of those previously paid land-use fees to bring the system up to a safe, protected level. The obligation is the park owners. The homeowners have already fulfilled their obligation, so let's get it fixed and let's get it fixed soon. It's a cancer that's only going to get worse.

Thank you.

MR. MAURICE PRIEST: Mr. Chairman, Senator Dunn, and Assemblymember Lowenthal, my name is Maurice Priest. I'm the Legislative Advocate for Golden State Mobilehome Owners League, recently renamed Golden State Manufactured Homeowners League, but it's still GSMOL.

I want to thank you for convening this hearing and for the hearing that Mr. Lowenthal conducted yesterday on this issue. It is one that is deserving of our attention. It is a tragedy, as others have said this morning, that three

people had to die to bring this into focus, but I'd like to concentrate at this time on what specifically should be done to address the problem. I'd like to make a specific legislative proposal that I hope the Legislature will act on this year. And I'm reminded of the saying that goes: Much can be done if we don't care who gets the credit.

I think, that in regard to legislation, particularly on fire safety, legislators who do not join on as active co-authors of legislation should be the ones to be embarrassed. It's something that I think all members want to address because we're talking about public safety. Specifically, my proposal is that we cannot correct a problem before we specifically identify what fire hydrants specifically in mobilehome parks do not work. If there are inadequate numbers of fire hydrants, if the pressure in existing fire hydrants is inadequate, the analysis that's an excellent analysis for today's hearing states that the Department of Housing is still using the 1977 NFPA regulations, and they've been updated twice and the state agency is behind the times. If the fire standards determined by the experts, you know, the state fire marshal, the local fire chiefs, the fire departments, the fire regulations, if they'd seen fit to update fire safety standards as recently as 1995, the state should get with it and increase those standards so that we're not enforcing something that's inadequate to adequately protect the safety of residents of mobilehome parks.

This year, we have an abundant surplus. All of us here have been reading about it in the newspaper, that between the legislators and the Governor's office, and gee, what do we do with this surplus? My recommendation is that we do urgency legislation, not wait until January 1, 2001, to start cracking the problem, urgency legislation, funded not by park owners, funded not by mobilehome owners, but from the state surplus to implement an immediate test of every mobilehome park in California. This could be developed by the state fire marshal with input from the local fire

chiefs, the fire departments, and fire districts. There should be a survey of every mobilehome park in the state to determine whether there are an adequate number of fire hydrants. Tests should be done on each fire hydrant to determine the adequacy of the pressure of that fire hydrant. With that information and that report being due by the first of the year, 2001, we could then implement Phase II of our legislative solution to this mess.

It's important that this be recognized as a state issue, deserving of proper use. Let's face it, with the State Department of Housing doing most of the mobilehome park inspections, this incident proves that it ain't making it. It's inadequate, it's not doing the job, people's safety and lives are at risk, and mobilehome owners, as Mr. Gullage stated a moment ago, are entirely dependent upon the park owner to provide adequate health and safety requirements. That's what they're paying their monthly rent for. But right now, there are loopholes, there are gaps, between the state and local enforcement. That should not exist. A park owner shouldn't have to guess what his obligations are. They should be clearly established. So the urgency survey and testing of every park and every fire hydrant between now and the first of the year is that first step.

The second step would be that we immediately convene an industry and consumer and fire marshal task force to identify what standards and what implementations should go into a bill that would be introduced January 1, 2001. We've got all aspects of the manufactured housing industry represented here today. The park owners' organizations are very active. The Golden State Mobilehome Owners League is determined to participate in those. From my experience in the last 20 years, it only takes a phone call to the organizations, to the industry, the manufacturers, to really get our attention and to get us to any meeting that needs to be held at the Capitol or anywhere else, and many of us are here today in Garden Grove. But if we convene that task force and we identify the nature of the problem and how it

should be addressed, legislation could be ready to go and introduced with the benefit of that survey information effective January 1, and I would hope that that also could be done by urgency legislation so that we don't have to let another year go by and we're talking about a solution for January 1, 2002. You know, I'd like to see this whole problem resolved perhaps within 12, 16 months, something like that, and it can be done and we have the adequate resources to do it.

Once the second phase of the legislation is introduced, my position is, and on behalf of GSMOL, that the homeowners should not have to finance a park owner's inadequate maintenance of the fire safety within the mobilehome park. We get hit with a lot of costs; we get hit and rents are going up as are our costs for a lot of things, but the upgraded system – and if complying with the '95 NFPA standards means that systems have to be upgraded, there's no reason why the senior citizens, retired seniors living in mobilehome parks and already facing increasing rent and other costs, should have to absorb this cost. This is a landlord issue, just like apartment owners have to provide safe housing for their residents. This is an issue which should squarely fall on park owners. And if upgrades are needed in their system, if there are basically fake fire hydrants within their system, there's no reason for them to exist. They should be corrected and functioning properly because that's what the residents pay for. So in terms of the long-term solution, I don't believe that it should be levied by the state or local government on a basis that would tie in and fall on the backs of mobilehome owners.

Park owners have been recovering rents. They continue to recover rents. They should use those to upgrade their own systems that we rely on. And there should be no loopholes between the state and the local enforcement. I think that the overlooked party in all this, frankly, is the state fire marshal and local fire officials. I may hire an appraiser, okay, to go

out and tell me what a house is worth. But if I really want to know whether the plumbing is working or not, I better send a plumber out there to test it. And I think we have to rely on the expertise of the fire marshal and the local fire officials to determine what is adequate and what is going to provide the necessary fire safety and then become determined to accomplish that task, and I look forward to working with Senator Dunn, with Mr. Lowenthal, with all the legislators, Senator Alarcon who has joined us now, and all the legislators who I believe want to find a solution to this, and I think that it's going to be better, the park owners, instead of getting hit for these occasional and unfortunate, tragic accidents, can then take pride in owning facilities that can no longer be accused of being unsafe. And consumers who are paying the rents can take some assurance in knowing that there's going to be adequate fire safety and water available in the event that a fire occurs, and it's just a matter of time.

Thank you very much.

SENATOR DUNN: MaryAnn, my apologies. I'm going to interrupt for just a second, if I may.

I was a little remiss when I introduced Assemblymember Alan Lowenthal in not mentioning that one of the reasons that both he and Senator Alarcon, who will I introduce in just a moment, are here is that Assemblymember Lowenthal is chair of the Assembly Housing Committee, which is the critical policy committee on the Assembly side, through which these issues will go through. And on the Senate side, Senator Richard Alarcon, who has joined us from the Los Angeles area, serves as Chair of the Senate Housing Committee.

Senator, any brief comments you want to make before we move on?

SENATOR RICHARD ALARCON: First of all, let me commend Senator Joe Dunn for his leadership in taking on this issue.

For those of you who don't know, in order to be chair of a select committee, you have to ask for it, and he asked for this because he was deeply concerned about the large number of mobilehomes in his district and some of the long-standing issues that you are delving into as we speak. So I want to commend him for his leadership and trying to tackle a very difficult, difficult issue.

This is kind of compelled by the recent events in Compton, and Assemblymember Lowenthal and I visited the site, as well as met with the community just a little bit after. And we recognize, I think, as a new cadre of legislators, all three of us having served in the Legislature for less than two years, we recognize that there really is a place for mobilehomes in California, that those mobilehomes are entitled to have a quality of life that is becoming of the concept of the California dream, and so we are going to work hard to improve the process, the system, the rules, to make lives better for all those people who rely on this form of housing. If we're going to meet the demand for affordable housing in the State of California, we absolutely believe that there's a very large place for mobilehomes in that.

I also want to thank all of you for attending. And you're right. You can pick up the phone; and within about 24 to 48 hours, get a hearing with mobilehome constituents coming anywhere in the State of California, but that's an accommodation to the mobilehome park owners, as well as the tenants, because they care. And if we have that kind of demographic participation in every aspect of our lives, I think our society would be much better for it. So we rely on your information and we thank you all for coming.

SENATOR DUNN: Thank you, Senator.

My apologies, MaryAnn, for interrupting before you testified. Please.

MS. MARYANN STEIN: My name is MaryAnn Stein and I'm the Vice-President for California Mobilehome Resource Action Association, which I will refer to as CMRAA in this hearing.

I want to thank you, Senator Dunn, Mr. Tennyson, Mr. Lowenthal, and Mr. Alarcon, for giving CMRAA this opportunity to testify today.

One thing I learned in college and I remember is try and stay within your time when you're making a speech. So what I did was condense some facts. Now I did my research by going to the horse's mouth. I went to the fire stations and I talked to the captains, and I talked to the fellows that fight the fires. And I've come up with some interesting facts which I'm going to relate to you.

The facts are that the fire hydrants in many manufactured home parks are privately owned. The hydrants and the water mains need to be serviced by qualified persons every year. Now the water capacity should be checked so the proper gallons per minute are dispensed. The gallons per minute necessary are based on the square footage and the construction of the structure. The manufactured home park owner is the responsible party to see that these privately owned hydrants are properly maintained. The Fire Prevention Bureau is not required to make an inspection of privately owned hydrants. The Fire Prevention Bureau, however, does require proof of maintenance when they consider it necessary. Proof of maintenance should be mandated in all mobilehome parks.

In talking to the firemen, I asked them what some of the common problems were when they went out to fight a fire, and these are some of the things they gave me. They said that many manufactured home parks do not have sufficient hydrants. We've already heard that this morning. When there are multiple homes on fire, it's very possible to run out of water because of the lack of hydrants in the mobilehome parks. When the hydrants are now properly maintained, one of the problems they have is that the key to open the hydrant doesn't always work. So this means they have to go find another hydrant while pulling hoses to get to the hydrant and this takes very valuable time in a mobilehome fire.

Finding the hydrant is also, there's another problem. In some cases, the bushes are allowed to grow and they cover the hydrant, and this poses a greater problem at night than it does during the day. They say there should not be any growth for a circumference of three feet surrounding any fire hydrant, and this is not being followed in the parks, okay? We all know that time is very precious when firemen are trying to contain a manufactured home fire. The very construction of most manufactured homes allows the fire to spread rapidly, and there is an urgency to contain the fire immediately.

The safety of manufactured home residents' lives are at stake when the ability to fight a fire is hindered by inadequate water supply, insufficient numbers of hydrants, improperly maintained hydrants, and the inability to find a hydrant. The very fact that we are dealing with lives makes a mandate necessary.

CMRAA is very much in favor of a mandate. The problem is, who's going to pay for it? CMRAA is very, very aware, that if the costs fall on the shoulders of the park owners one more time, those least able to pay, the manufactured homeowners, will bear the cost. Because of this, CMRAA definitely does not want this cost to be passed onto the residents. We suggest the mandate be backed with money from the state budget or a federal grant. Manufactured homes are considered low-income housing, and the cost of bringing the parks up to proper safety codes should not become an additional burden to an already overburdened community.

Thank you.

SENATOR DUNN: Thank you. Any questions, Mr. Lowenthal, Senator?

SENATOR ALARCON: As I was walking in, you were making reference to a survey. I serve as Vice-Chair of the Joint Legislative Audit Committee, and I'm wondering, if there was an audit related to this industry

about eight or nine years ago, and I'm wondering if you could use a vehicle of an audit, would that be helpful in some way?

MR. PRIEST: It may be helpful to us. I don't have that much expertise in the audit or what the parameters are and what you can do with an audit. But what I was suggesting at the time you arrived was that part of this state surplus that we're hearing so much about these days in the press, you know, between the Legislature and the Governor's office, be used to conduct an actual survey to be overseen by the state fire marshal and local fire districts to determine the number of fire hydrants within each mobilehome park in the state, to determine whether there's an adequate number of fire hydrants, and also test each one to determine the adequacy of the pressure, as many of the witnesses have said. So if that's something that could be done within the purview of an audit, I'm not as concerned about what vehicle is used, as long as we let those with expertise actually conduct the test, bring the statistics back to us by the end of the year.

SENATOR ALARCON: I will work with you and Senator Dunn because I think you can probably avoid a lot of bureaucracy if we can define an audit in a way to extrapolate more information that would be helpful. It might save us a lot of time and energy.

Thank you.

SENATOR DUNN: All right. Thank you.

I'm going to bring up the next individual alone, and then we're going to have four on the panel after that.

If I can have Rosario Ragazzo, General Manager, El Rancho, to please join us.

Steve, you may want to identify yourself as well.

MR. STEVEN RONK: Steven Ronk from Gordon and Rees. I represent El Rancho Mobilehome Park.

SENATOR DUNN: Good morning. Right into the microphone. There you go. Everybody can hear? Perfect.

MR. ROSARIO RAGAZZO: Good morning, Senator Dunn and gentlemen. I'm here to testify not only for the El Rancho Mobilehome Park in question but maybe to shed some light on some of the ideas that I may have that could be very helpful in this situation that we have.

Number one, I represent not only as a general manager for this park but I am also a consultant for other park owners. So the parks that I am involved in go back quite a few years. They're probably 40 or 50 years of age that do not have fire hydrants, as I've been hearing conversations all morning long with reference to fire hydrants within the park. So for the most part, the residents are really at a disadvantage because at these parks, prior to the '68, being built prior to '68, excuse me, that they have no protection whatsoever.

It would be my thought to help the residents, that maybe the fire department of the cities or the owners of the park should provide adequate smoke detectors in the mobilehomes. Each mobilehome or manufactured housing, like they're called today, the older homes only require one in the hall. The new manufactured housing require one in each bedroom. So it would be to the advantage of the residents, that if the management of the park, owners of the park, or the city fire department go through their community and find out how many bedrooms they have and what have you, and supply these smoke detectors and also five-pound ABC fire extinguishers, at least, if some fire started within their home, they have a chance to do something to protect their lives and also their neighbors. That would be one of the things that I would strongly recommend. Who would bear that burden or responsibility?

We just purchased for El Rancho Mobilehome Park fire extinguishers and smoke detectors to the tune of $5500 to supply to each resident. The

point is, that I think if the city would supply that through the fire department, I believe that the amount that they would be purchasing would drive the costs down and it would not be that burdensome in general.

I don't know what is the true solution for how we protect all the residents. We do need to have some sort of guidelines to enforce some of the violations that are within the communities that are not the burden of the owners of the park or the owners that I know, anyway, that it also has to be the burden of the residents to make sure that they don't have the violations that can create these unnecessary situations.

That's all I have right now.

SENATOR DUNN: Okay. Any questions?

Thank you very much, sir.

MR. RAGAZZO: Thank you.

SENATOR DUNN: Let's bring up the next panel, which will be our last panel, before our quick, mid-morning break, and they include Mike Cirillo, President, WMA; Norm McAdoo, park owner; Terry Dowdall, attorney; and also Mr. Bill Hanks. If we can have those four individuals come forward.

We're going to be a little crowded here so you may want to shift the chairs around a little bit.

Sir?

MR. NORM McADOO: Good morning. Senator Dunn, fellow legislators, and John, thank you for holding the hearing.

SENATOR DUNN: So everybody knows your name and where your from...

MR. McADOO: My name is Norm McAdoo, and I am from Garden Grove, and I've been in the business 43 years, since 1957 and am presently with my partners who own and operate six parks in Orange County and Riverside Counties which we built.

During the course of the hearing I'd like to compliment John, a well-done paper he did. He covered the subject in full and accurately.

SENATOR DUNN: He always does a good job.

MR. McADOO: I used to testify before this committee when the late Senator Craven was chairman. We didn't always agree but we were always great friends.

ASSEMBLYMEMBER LOWENTHAL: Norm, can you tell us just how old the parks are so I have this understanding whether they're pre-1968 or post-1968?

MR. McADOO: One park was built in '64. I had one that was built in '55, which I don't have any more. I had one that was built in '68, '72, '73, '70, and '81. It covers a long range.

ASSEMBLYMEMBER LOWENTHAL: Show us both the entire spectrum of what's built.

MR. McADOO: The first park I built, we put in the inch-and-a-half risers, according to code, with a 75-foot of fire hose hanging on each one. And during the 30 years that I had that park, we never used any of them. When the fire truck came in, they put it out with the water they had on the tanker. Fires in mobilehomes are very self-contained, and the fire department, from my observation, wets down the neighboring home so it doesn't spread.

There's been a study on all of our parks as they got newer and got more fire hydrants. The second park we had a fire hydrant that could reach anywhere in the park with no more than 500 feet of hose, and the later ones had a lot of hydrants. And all of these hydrant systems were approved by the local fire marshal in each city or county before we ever started construction.

There's a study by the Foremost Insurance company, which is the country's largest insurer of mobilehomes, and it says: The prime risk is identified – this is for fires in mobilehomes – as hazardous conditions in the mobilehome. Studies of mobilehome fires found that the number one cause is

inadequate maintenance of the home's mechanical systems – furnaces, flues, fireplaces, space heaters, wood stoves, water heaters, electrical systems, electrical appliance, and kitchen stoves.

If those systems aren't maintained, you're probably going to have a fire. If they are maintained, you probably won't have a fire. And it lists where the fires start and the object, and which ones start first.

There is another report by the Florida Department of Housing, Agriculture, and Consumer Services. It says: The focus should be narrowed on inspection and education to hazardous conditions in the mobilehomes which are improperly maintained. The evidence suggests, that in older mobilehomes, a fire will destroy them within two to 15 minutes. This is not true of modern, post-code homes. And they list 25 instances where fires start in mobilehomes, and I have a written report I'll give to you.

In my experience, in all those years, I think I've had four homes burn down. The home next to it was never set afire and nobody was ever hurt.

The difference in the construction of homes, in the mid-60s, '50s and '60s, the homes were built with all wood inside, and the finish they put on that wood most of the time was lacquer. It was highly flammable.

In the '70s, better fire codes were adopted in the manufacturing, and the paint material had to be fire retardant, the drapes, the carpets.

Starting after the HUD codes were adopted in 1976, the fire restrictions were greater. In the 1980s, most manufacturers went to interior walls of drywall. Number one, for sale, now probably number one to meet the standards; and number two, they're more saleable. People liked them better. So it isn't a problem with the new homes as much as it is a problem with the old homes.

I think the fire there was devastating that we had in Compton, and our heart goes out to those people, and our industry wants to make changes to

help them. The problem is or the question is: What changes need to be made?

I suggest three things. Give the local fire departments not only the authority, perhaps even a mandate to go to every park in their district and check the fire hydrants – operate them, turn them on, and see that they do work. And the expense statewide, it's a big deal. If you keep it at each local community, it isn't that big a deal.

The other thing that I think, and I think the industry can do this, is to start a continuing education program for the people that live in the homes. Be sure that they know they should have smoke detectors and know that the batteries work. And they should have a couple of fire extinguishers. And I'll bet local park owners can probably even arrange a quantity purchase of fire extinguishers. They're dirt cheap and they're easy to use, but a continuing education to people that live there as to what causes fires.

My third suggestion, and this will be controversial, is at the time of resale of these older homes, a method be devised where without financially burdening the people that own them that are trying to sell them, they can be phased out, and post-code homes can be put in there. This does several things: It gets rid of the old, but more importantly it does not put in the hands of a new, unsuspecting buyer an unsafe home, and that's what's happening today. These homes can be dressed up to where they look really nice on the outside, but the current law prohibits anybody – John or anybody in authority – to go into the home and check what's happening inside. And that's where the problem is; that's where the fires start; and that's where people are hurt.

Thank you very much.

SENATOR DUNN: Thank you.

Senator.

SENATOR ALARCON: With regard to that last comment, why would somebody sell – you said at the point of sale, why would somebody want to sell if they knew it was going to be taken?

MR. McADOO: A lot of these homes are sold after people died and the heirs sell them. A lot of them are sold when people want to go into a rest home for assisted living and a lot of the people just sell them.

SENATOR ALARCON: So I think you might want to tailor your request to some of the specific...

MR. McADOO: Like I said, there needs to be a task force where the residents and the park owners and government have to agree, because if you don't agree, it's not going to happen.

SENATOR ALARCON: I want to say, with regard to your last, your third point, I think you would need to be a little more specific because, otherwise, you would incentivise people to keep their old property.

MR. McADOO: I'm not going to tailor the bill back here, but they do sell for a variety of reasons. A lot of people buy after the heirs sell it. And I bought a lot of homes from the heirs, and I've arranged with a dealer to haul it out and put in a new home, and the heirs were happy. We paid them for it. We put in a new home, and the new buyer had a good product that's going to last for many years because today's code-built homes are equal or better than stick-built homes in every way.

SENATOR DUNN: You have a question?

ASSEMBLYMEMBER LOWENTHAL: Yes. I have a question for Mr. McAdoo.

You have owned a range of homes, parks --

MR. McADOO: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMEMBER LOWENTHAL: -- from older to new, and I'm sure some of your parks have been, the inspection process has been by the

HCD and under state fire codes and then some of them may have been also by the locals and by looking at local fire codes also.

Can you tell us, because I'm concerned that we also look at the inspection process itself, what that's been like, and the differences between when it's a state versus a local inspection, and what they look for, and what information comes back to you usually.

MR. McADOO: Most, nearly most, of the local governments have turned the authority for inspections over to the state because the local governments don't have the expertise for mobilehomes and they don't have the funds to do the inspections. Riverside County still handles their inspections; they're large enough; they do it very well. All the cities that I'm in have turned it over to the state. And the state knows how to do it very well. They have a tremendous burden because they get all the parks that are out in the boondocks and they have to drive a half a day before they ever get to the job. And most of the serious violations were found in the mobilehomes or around the mobilehomes rather than in the park common areas. There were some found in both. Generally, the park common areas are fixed rather rapidly, and sometimes the mobilehome repairs take a while to get fixed because of economics and other reasons.

Another thing that I started doing at our parks many years ago, wherever our fire hydrants are, I put a blue reflector in the middle of the street, just like all the cities do. If the fire department comes in, he can drive down our street and see a blue reflector and he knows the hydrant is there. That's something the parks can do very easily.

SENATOR DUNN: Absolutely. Go ahead, Senator.

SENATOR ALARCON: You mentioned, depending on when the mobilehome was manufactured, there are various fire standards. Last night this issue came up – the representative of the Housing Department said that

a fire is a fire and it doesn't matter. I think it does, depending on when the trailer was built.

So has anybody – we know that we have the financial resources to inspect every seven years. Have we ever, in your experience, considered gradating the inspections or prioritizing inspections for older trailers as opposed to just having this flat...

MR. McADOO: After they ran the first phase of an inspection service, it took about eight or nine years, and it was just about completed. Maybe they have.

The second phase was passed legislatively last year to go out for another seven or eight years. At that time, their only range is to inspect the parks and the homes where they found serious problems before; if they came into a park and didn't find any problems, they're not going back to that park unless they get a call because they don't have the manpower or the funds to do it.

SENATOR ALARCON: That's really not addressing my question. My question is: Would there be any benefit to increasing the inspections on older homes based on when the more sufficient restrictions were put in place as time passed, in saying that any home, any mobilehome, built before 1976 would have a certain number of inspections.

MR. McADOO: Yes, you're correct. Right now, there's no way that an inspector can get inside of a mobile home, according to the laws, without a search warrant, you know, from a judge.

SENATOR ALARCON: Okay.

MR. McADOO: They can volunteer and let you in. But some of those older homes have been there for years. The fire box and the furnace is burnt out; it's got holes in it. For a number of years, they were allowed to use aluminum wiring in mobilehomes. Aluminum oxidizes and gets smaller, the circumference of it, and it gets loose in the lug and it arcs, and it sets a fire

that fast. I've seen the plug boxes that have just set afire from arcing aluminum wire.

SENATOR ALARCON: One final question. In your experience, have local jurisdictions ever used redevelopment resources to upgrade mobilehomes?

MR. McADOO: Not to my knowledge. But they, I think are mandated by law that 20 percent of their redevelopment funds has to be used in some type of housing. The City of Orange...

SENATOR DUNN: Maybe Mr. Tennyson can shed some light on it.

MR. JOHN TENNYSON: Some local governments do have programs. Westminster, here in Orange County, has a program for rehab of low-income housing, including mobilehomes, and they do provide grants or loans for refurbishing some of these homes. It's rather limited.

MR. McADOO: Sometimes it takes a long time. I just went through one of those that have spent $8,000 on a mobilehome, and mostly what they did was cosmetic. And last month, a lady died and now the heirs have to pay it all back, if they die or sell it within two years. It was a waste of money.

SENATOR ALARCON: Assuming that the money goes for the right purpose, it seems to me that many of the people that live in these homes have qualified for grants and loans under housing programs, if we can devise a program. And so I would be very interested in...

MR. McADOO: ...the right purpose, rather than fix an old home, is to use that money to help that person to buy a new home.

SENATOR ALARCON: It doesn't matter to me. The point is that I would be very interested in working with Senator Dunn to develop a program within the State of California that targets mobilehome owners because I believe that most of them will qualify for a variety of grants and loans and utilize that money to either upgrade or use for purchasing more updated

mobilehomes, particularly where there may be safety hazards that they remain under those conditions.

MR. McADOO: You're correct. I think working together, people can do anything. Pointing fingers you never get anything done.

SENATOR DUNN: Let's move onto the next one, whoever wants to go. Go ahead.

MR. MIKE CIRILLO: Yes. Good morning, gentlemen. My name is Mike Cirillo. I'm the current President of WMA.

SENATOR DUNN: Mike, let me interrupt.

Can everybody hear?

Yes? Okay.

MR. CIRILLO: My business address is 1400 East Fourth Street, Santa Ana, California.

Mr. McAdoo did a very thorough job and I'm not going to repeat any of the comments that he made. My firm is involved in the ownership and management of a number of communities, and the newest of those communities was constructed in 1975. The oldest was built sometime in the '40s, as close as we can tell, and the range of the communities that we have, most of them were built in the late '60s, early '70s, which I think is characteristic of the whole state. There just has not been a whole lot of new construction since the '80s.

I've been involved in this industry for 22 years; and in that period of time, we've had no more than a handful of fires. To my knowledge, we've never had a fatality and to my knowledge, we've never had a fire consume more than one home, as Mr. McAdoo mentioned. And from our perspective, the best protection from a fire is the prevention of a fire. And Mr. McAdoo hit the nail on the head in a number of those things that the older homes just don't have the features and the appurtenances to them that the newer homes do and they do. Once they ignite, they go very, very quickly. My

observations, in terms of the communication with the fire departments over the years has been, when they come in a park, they bring their own water and they do exactly as Mr. McAdoo pointed out. They're looking to protect the fire from spreading to other homes. They realize there's nothing to be done once it's ignited. They're totaled from top to bottom in a matter of minutes, and I think our focus needs to be on the prevention of the fires. And our organization, WMA, has established a fire safety tax force at the Board of Directors meeting this month, in January. We did form this committee and we are interested in doing whatever we can on a cooperative basis to promulgate fire safety.

Thank you.

SENATOR DUNN: Thank you. Next witness.

MR. BILL HANKS: My name is Bill Hanks. I work for a property management company. We own 4 manufactured housing communities and we manage in excess of 50 throughout the state. We've been involved, much like Mike, personally for over 20 years. And actually my story is very similar to his, in that in the communities that I've been involved with over the years, I can think of possibly maybe five fires that actually happened. They were all, I won't say all, but the ones that come to mind were pre-1968 parks, which we managed many of. In each case that, again, that I can recall, other than once instance where there was a hydrant outside the park that the fire department hooked up to – in each case, the fire department brought in their own water. And also in each case, the home that originally had caught on fire was damaged pretty much to the ground, with the exception of one where I know that it did go to an adjoining mobilehome, they were all almost, they were all contained to that individual home.

I only say that just to, you know, obviously one fire that kills one person is too many, and we're certainly not shirking responsibility to make things better and improve the conditions and make our parks safer. That's

not what that's all about. It's just to give the Committee and you folks an idea that it is not a common, ongoing situation where these fires are going through parks and destroying homes. We did have one earlier this year in a park in Glendora, again, a pre-1968 park, in which there was minor damage to a second home, the initial home was damaged and had to be pulled out, and the fire department hooked up to a hydrant outside the park.

I won't go on. A lot of what I was going to talk about has been covered. But, you know, it just seems to me that the causes of the fires and what we're hearing are within the mobilehomes themselves, and the focus should be on inspections and education of the homeowners as to how to prevent potential hazardous conditions. And I think we need to be involved with that, the residents need to, the park owners, and the on-site management and their staff, all can to work together to help educate the residents, as far as making their homes a safer place to be.

Again, skipping through, I'll just conclude in that unfortunately, the best outside fire equipment that probably is state-of-the-art fire equipment, the quickest possible response time by the local fire department probably are not going to save a home once a fire starts. It's been stated that a home is destroyed in two to 15 minutes, and it comes out of the Foremost report. So chances are, once a fire starts in that home, that home's gone, which is why I think education and making residents aware of how they can prevent safety issues is very important.

I'm also a member of the WMA board of directors. And in addition to the task force that the board has established, we're working on a program to educate our owners and our managers as to ways to get information, such as this, to our residents. And one thing we will be doing within the next month or two is putting out written materials in our statewide magazines, to the parks and to the owners that can hand it out to the residents.

Thank you very much.

SENATOR DUNN: Go ahead.

MR. TERRY DOWDALL: Good morning, Senators and Ladies and Gentlemen. I'm Terry Dowdall, D-o-w-d-a-l-l. I'm an attorney here in Orange and have offices in Sacramento. For the past 20 years, I've had the privilege and honor of limiting my practice to representation of manufactured housing community owners, mobilehome parks owners and trailer parks alike all over the state. Also, I'm a member of the Continuing Education for BAR with regard to mobilehome tenancy and other contracts with Matthew Bender, legal publishers for.

Through the course of this activity in my career, I've had a chance to look at fire protection relatively closely. What we have from a legal landscape is a fairly complex regulatory web statewide that deals with the Mobilehome Parks Act and with Title 25. It comprehensively now regulates fire protection in mobilehome parks by the incorporation of the national standards which have been referred to earlier. Yes, Title 25 does still refer to the 1977 standards and now we have 1995 standards. However, I think that there are a few irrefutable facts that deal with the issues before the Committee that need to be looked at.

One, as you've heard from the other speakers is that the older mobile homes, especially the pre-HUD homes, the pre-1976 homes, burn very quickly because of their lack of services, aluminum wire, and actually the materials that turn them into cinder boxes have burned anywhere from two to fifteen, four to seven minutes. The bottom line is that the fireman is going to be too late. If we look at an older home such as this, a pre-HUD home, 1972 single wide, and this home were to be put in the newest manufactured housing community you could find today with state-of-the-art fire protection equipment, if that home catches fire, the fireman will be too late. We're talking about loss of life within the home within a period of minutes.

Now this is because predominantly mechanical systems just aren't mentioned, and by reason of sometimes cigarettes, overloading the circuits, and the modern appliances we have today, whether it's microwaves, other appliances, old plugs, and residents that can't maybe afford to upgrade their appliances within the homes.

So if the issue is the source of the fire rather than dealing with protection after the fire consumes the home, and if every mobilehome fire results in a total loss to the mobilehome because of the speed at which it proceeds, then what else do we have? Interior inspections of the homes. That, as Mr. McAdoo has said, is not a feasible solution. We have the idea of perhaps retrofitting mobilehome parks with new hydrant systems. The problem with that is, it's ineffectual to solve the problem because the loss of life is going to occur before the fireman can get to those plugs. Also, the other thing is that the firemen can typically bring their own tankers. They have their own water supply on board.

In my office, which is an old 1920s house that's been converted to a law office not far from here in Orange, I had a fire in a wall because of a bad plug. And when the fire department came, the first thing they did is to roll the hoses off the truck, right up to the house, then proceeded to take the roof off my office. Aside from that incident, it's been a very pleasant place to practice law. However, the issue is, that they bring their own water, typically. If they have a fire hydrant, the home is going to be consumed before they get there and all you are talking about is stopping, as Mr. McAdoo has said, the spread of the fire.

So what are we left with? Well, we're left with, I think, the issue, number one, of trying to eliminate hazardous conditions within the home. I'm not sure if education or legislation is the answer. My sense is that a comprehensive program of education, perhaps voluntary discussions for safety hazards, so we get rid of the leaky fire boxes that can start a fire,

overloaded appliances, consumer safety, voluntary compliance with that, and the idea would also be to educate the public as to what the risks are and hazards are.

Why is it that we should have any charged vessel with petroleum gas inside a mobilehome, like a hand grenade waiting to go off? Charged vessels shouldn't be used or kept inside mobilehomes. Even homes that are fired with propane for their systems are kept outside, not underneath, so that is an issue.

As far as retrofitting, there are legal issues that come up with that. The leading legal tax text in the area states that any subsequent changes in the law cannot affect the previously approved development. So I believe that there are very powerful legal impediments that require the park owner to go back and to put fire hydrants in the mobilehome park. In situations where the local agency has assumed the HCD jurisdiction and carries forth with enforcement of Title 25, local agencies cannot do that because of Prop. 218 requirements without the popular vote. So what we're left with is what we have, and I believe that a more comprehensive enforcement and inspection of these hydrants to the extent they exist are good. But if we're going to get at the source of the fire, then what we need to do is to attack prevention and deal with safety in the home. That's where the fire is happening and that's what we need to deal with.

Thank you.

SENATOR DUNN: Go ahead.

ASSEMBLYMEMBER LOWENTHAL: Just a quick question for all the members of the panel.

Do you believe that it's safe to continue this distinction between pre-1968 and post-1968 fire standards in terms of what is required for a mobilehome park prior to 1968 versus the standards that exist post-1968? Is

that a safe condition for us? And that's in state law. Is that a safe condition for us to continue with that distinction?

MR. DOWDALL: My sense is, if I can speak...

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Are you talking about the home or the park?

ASSEMBLYMEMBER LOWENTHAL: I'm talking about the park, the mobilehome park, talking about fire standards and the requirements for hydrants and inspections. There's a distinction folks, and I'm just asking you, and that's in state law, is that safe for us to continue with that distinction?

MR. DOWDALL: I think it is. The Legislature, insomuch, recognized, that with the O'Connell bill that was effective this year with regard to the seven-year inspection program, whereby there is a gradation or a definition within mobilehome park communities as to which will get inspected more frequently than others dealing with past safety violations and past complaints.

ASSEMBLYMEMBER LOWENTHAL: But there are the requirements...

MR. DOWDALL: There are different requirements. If those requirements are enforced, given the technologies available that were used at the time, if those codes are enforced and inspected and maintained, then I don't see why there should be any difficulty.

Now there are more state-of-the-art – as you know, technology is spinning out of control in front of us, but there are fire extinguishers, as Mr. McAdoo has said, there are other suppression devices available, state-of-the-art suppression devices available, that can be employed. However, the problem is that these suppression devices are simply too late to deal with the problem in the home, and I keep coming back to that which everybody has made reference to. These are the people that actually write the checks when

there are these fires. They're very concerned with understanding the reasons for fire, and what they say is that it's mechanical systems in the home – the furnaces, the kitchen appliances, the electrical, the gas, the wiring. And if we can deal with that, we can deal with virtually the entire pie of the issue.

SENATOR DUNN: Any questions? I want to thank each of you.

It is now time for our mid-morning break. We're almost on time, but we have to reduce it to five minutes, just enough time to use the restroom, get another cup of coffee, then we're back on board.

*** **BREAK** ***

SENATOR DUNN: Just getting settled in, why don't we get our next two panelists to come up, and that's James Murphy from the City of Compton, Jerry Halberstadt from Garden Grove.

And again, as you two heard me say to everybody, please speak right into that microphone so everyone can hear.

And again, to the audience, if you are in the back and cannot hear one of the witnesses, just raise your hands and I'll be sure that we get it louder. Okay.

MR. JAMES MURPHY: Good morning, Senator Dunn. Good morning, Assemblyman Lowenthal and panel. I want to thank you for giving us this opportunity to express some of the concerns from the fire service point of view with regard to this issue. Obviously, I've been very involved in this entire incident for a considerable period of time.

Let me introduce myself. I'm James Murphy. I'm the Administrative Battalion Chief for the City of Compton. I supervise the Fire Prevention and Code Enforcement Division of our fire department. I'm also a member of the Fire Prevention Committee of the International Association of Fire Chiefs.

This issue, I think, boils down to very simply it's a fundamental issue. We've heard some very eloquent testimony this morning with regard to what the problem is. I think we need to be addressing solutions to the problem. And essentially the solution to fire protection is to put fire protection where it belongs in the Fire Code. Title 25 in the Mobilehome Parks Act does not really adequately address fire protection. It addresses many other things. It addresses Building Codes, which are very important. They are an adjunct to means of fire protection because, if a building is inadequately constructed or maintained, it heightens the fire risk of that facility. But in terms of what we are here for today -- the fire protection systems, hydrant systems -- those need to be adequately addressed in the Fire Code.

I have some suggestions that I think could possibly, in my opinion, go a long way to resolve this issue.

First of all, put all the fire prevention, all the fire protection and life safety requirements in Title 19, put them in the Fire Code where they belong. Take them out of the Title 25.

Increase the inspection frequency with regard to the enforcement in Title 25. A seven-year inspection is not adequate. All that does is give opportunities for violations to fester. And then when it does become time for them to be corrected, you have tripled the cost, sometimes quadrupled the cost, of bringing them into compliance.

Thirdly, and I think very importantly, remove the exemption for pre-1968 facilities. We're taking the oldest facilities and virtually leaving them out there unprotected. Essentially, in the real world, what that does, it puts the people that live in those facilities are primarily our senior citizens, many of them that are infirmed or people in our community that have very low incomes that can only afford that type of low-income housing and we're institutionalizing second-class citizenship for those people because of the lack of protection. They don't have the same protection that you or I or anyone

else who may live in a normal home or even in a post-1968 manufactured home. They have no protection whatsoever.

As an example, El Rancho Mobilehome Park dates back to 1935. If you interpret the Code, read the Code, that means it's under 1935 Fire Codes. That's ridiculous. And even if you tried to enforce NFPA standards, which are only standards, they're not Fire Codes per se, they're standards with regard to 1977, which is what the Code says, you still have no teeth. Fire prevention inspectors, fire officials need to have the tools in order to enforce the codes and to make these facilities fire safe.

It's basically the way the law reads right now, it's throwing us into the arena blindfolded, with our hands behind our back, and telling us to fight and there's nothing to fight with. It doesn't matter whether HCD enforces the Code; it doesn't matter if the local jurisdiction enforces the code. The problem is the Code. It doesn't matter who enforces it.

So I firmly believe that there needs to be a total re-evaluation of the fire safety provisions of the Mobilehome Parks Act. There needs to be a total re-evaluation of the inspection frequency of the Mobilehome Parks Act. And again, as I said, take the fire protection and life safety issues out of the Mobilehome Parks Act; put them in Title 19. Make mobilehome parks a state-required inspected building, just like we do high rises, just like we do day care facilities. Ensure the safety of these people.

It's really all I have to say.

SENATOR DUNN: Okay. Thank you.

Any questions? Okay.

MR. JERRY HALBERSTADT: My name is Jerry Halberstadt. I am with the Garden Grove Fire Department. I'm a Division Chief and Fire Marshal. I've got over 30 years' experience in fire suppression and fire protection.

The problem we have here is that mobilehome parks aren't any different than any other dwelling complex, except for the fact that some of the older mobilehomes burn very rapidly and generally are more of a fire problem because of the closeness of the coaches from one to another.

In apartment complexes, which are under my code, state Fire Code, we inspect once a year. We don't go into every individual dwelling. Generally we can't do that without permission, but we do inspect the grounds. We inspect the common areas. Every one of my complexes, with the exception of mobilehome parks, have hydrants. Yes, we do carry water on our pumpers, We carry 500 gallons. You won't talk to a fireman in this room that will not urge you to put hydrants in those parks. Five hundred gallons is good for approximately four minutes for one line. If you have a unit that is starting to catch fire next to the one that's burning, you now use two lines, and you have two minutes' worth of water. You need a reliable source to supply the pumpers.

Title 25 seems to be the problem. Yet actually, unless my city adopts Title 25 and takes over the responsibility for the park, I cannot go into the park and do much of anything. In Garden Grove, we have ignored the Code, at least have gone in and flow tested the hydrants. Now I have 11 parks in the city, four of which do not have hydrants. I have no way to improve the fire protection for those parks.

Part of the citizens in Garden Grove that I protect are the residents. They are protected under the Fire Code and they have very good protection. The ones that are in these parks without hydrants have no protection from me; other than the fact that once they start, we can try to go in and put the fire out, and hopefully we can put it out with either the 500 gallons of water we have on board or I have enough pumpers on site that I can run to the nearest hydrant, which may be as much as a thousand feet away and lay a line and supply that hydrant water to that pumper, and that takes time. In

protection and fire suppression, time and water supply are the two big factors.

If you give us an early alarm, we can get there before the fire really builds, and we have a very good chance of putting it out rapidly and with just a little fire lost as possible. If we have a delayed alarm, then it depends on where the fire is when we get there. If it is the old coach that's burning, there's nothing we're going to be able to do, except to protect the adjacent coaches.

I heard it said that the insurance companies apparently don't care about the hydrants. They really want to protect the buildings themselves, and that's not really true. If you look at ISO, the first thing they look at is the water system, and they want to know how often you test your hydrants, and they go out and actually flow the public water system and they grade the water system. The insurance companies do watch hydrants. They understand what those are for. Unfortunately, with the worrying and the way that Title 25 is right now, there is nothing that the local fire official can do. You can either give us the power through the local Fire Code and let us do our job, or you can do it through Title 19, but something has to change if you want us to be able to impact fire protection in the mobilehome parks.

Thank you.

SENATOR DUNN: Jerry, thank you. If you could, for just a moment, what sort of history, say, in the past ten years, have we had here locally in Garden Grove, of fires in mobilehome parks?

MR. HALBERSTADT: We haven't had fires in mobilehome parks. I don't have an exact number. Depending upon the age of the coach, the amount of time we've had since the alarm or the time in which the fire is found and then alarmed, the coach may have minor damage or it could be totally burned out and I've had both.

SENATOR DUNN: Okay. You heard the park owner representatives indicate, as you briefly touched upon in your testimony, that really the issue isn't the hydrants, because by then, it's basically too late. The home where the fire started is probably going to be destroyed, at least to a significant degree, regardless of how quickly you're able to respond and whether or not there is a hydrant there and that the spread to other homes, at least I gathered was, and at least statistically, not as much of a risk as we may perceive.

How would you comment on those issues, Jerry?

MR. HALBERSTADT: I would comment, that if you have a well-involved mobile home and it's particularly an older park where the spaces are much more narrow, you cannot walk over and put your hand on the adjacent coach without burning yourself. They have awnings, usually on both sides, one with a car in it, one with a patio. That holds the heat, actually causes a convection current to move out, away from that coach, right at the adjacent coaches.

One of our concerns in a mobilehome park, because of the congestion, is that it can go into a complication type of situation where we can have multiple fires. We have not had that in Garden Grove, but then I have 18 square miles that are covered by seven stations. That is pretty dense, and we have pumpers that are on site, usually within five minutes, and can take some action. In an earthquake or another type of disaster, that may not be possible and we may have multiple fires in those type of buildings, the same as we might have in apartment complexes.

SENATOR DUNN: Any other questions?

John?

MR. TENNYSON: Real quickly for Chief Murphy, Fire Marshal, what kind of preparedness plans do you have for mobilehome parks in your jurisdiction, in terms of going in and assessing the situation in each park so

you know what you're dealing with before you get there, whether they have hydrants or not or what the congestion problems are, in terms of cars parked along the road and the roads within the park and so forth?

MR. MURPHY: Our department does pre-fire plans for each one of the mobilehome parks within our jurisdiction.

SENATOR DUNN: Which is how many?

MR. MURPHY: Twelve.

SENATOR DUNN: Twelve. Thank you.

MR. MURPHY: That pre-fire plan normally indicates the number of sites, number of spaces, within the park. It does not address, however, because in most cases, in most all the cases, the setback regulations are not observed so they are a lot denser than what they're supposed to be.

I agree with my colleague here from Garden Grove. In many of these facilities, the actual structures are too close together. If one starts burning, the convection of heat is going to carry it to another. These are the issues that technically are addressed in Title 25 but they're not really enforced. Here again is one of the problems.

I think, that if we're going to be really looking at, in terms of developing fire safe programs and education of our residents, and fire safe policies and procedures, once a fire gets started, and in particular a mobilehome fire, in most cases, it's going to be completely destroyed before the fire department gets there. Our role is going to be essentially keeping the fire from spreading to adjacent facilities and avoiding a conflagration. But there's one other role, in the Fire Code giving these local fire officials the ability to address in the Fire Code, that when that fire – at some point in time, that fire was in the incipient stage, and those people, if the facility was occupied, will have a very, very limited time to get out, early warning.

In many mobilehomes, there are no smoke detectors. Particularly in pre-1968 facilities, there are no smoke detectors. I think, as Assemblyman

Lowenthal saw yesterday, many of them don't comply with normal Fire Codes in terms of security bars or bedroom facilities, so you limit the method of individuals trying to get out. No pre-fire plan in the world is going to change that, and these are the issues that really need to be addressed.

ASSEMBLYMEMBER LOWENTHAL: I'd like to follow up on that a little bit. If in fact what we're hearing is the kind of, I think, the role of the local agency and how that interfaces with the mobilehome park and some of the limitations by having it in, what you're saying, having it in Title 25 and potentially moving toward the Fire Code itself or to Title 19, what specifically would we see that would be different, I mean in terms of requirements? Can you give me something concrete when we begin to talk about the ability to escape with those bars that we saw, when we visited El Rancho? What we saw was a – because it was not covered under Title 19, people in bedrooms that could not get out because no one was inspecting for that.

What other things might I see that would be different if the state Legislature, let's say, made that move to move it towards Title 19?

MR. MURPHY: What you would see, you would see better pre-warning for the residents, smoke detectors required in all bedroom facilities, removal, or at least compliance with escape routes, those residents that have security bars. You can probably see a reduction in the density separating the structures further to reduce the possibility of convected heat and radiant heat upon the other facilities. You will certainly see a much, much better enforcement of hydrant and water supply requirements within the parks, and I think that's very crucial because, if we can get people out, then we're only dealing with property. When people are essentially trapped inside, then you're dealing with not only life, but then you're dealing with property also.

Exiting would probably be another thing that you would see a considerable amount of improvement in. And these are the kinds of things that have a definite impact on whether or not an individual is able to get out

of a building that's on fire as opposed to an individual that can't get out and basically is consumed.

MR. HALBERSTADT: Currently, to answer your question, under Title 25, inspections for the fire protection is questionable. Under the California Fire Code, which we've adopted in the city, we are mandated to inspect those type of complexes on a yearly basis. We would have firemen in there once a year, at least, to inspect those things, which is not happening now. And as my colleague said, if you can catch things early on, before they become a big problem, it's usually less expensive for the owners.

The Code itself ties into the Building Code, and Title 19 does the same thing. And when those codes are updated, you would not see something like a 1977 edition of a NFPA standard being used. They update those standards. And you wouldn't have something that would be actually brought into place and then never touched again for a number of years.

SENATOR DUNN: Any other questions? No others?

Thank you, both of you.

MR. ALVIN KUSAMOTO: My name is Alvin Kusamoto. I'm the District Director for Senator Alarcon who had to leave. I have a quick question. You mentioned that time and water supply are the major factors in fighting fires. How long does it take for you to hook up to a hydrant that's a thousand feet away?

MR. HALBERSTADT: That varies. I mean it's really hard to tell you because I've got a complex that has a nice straight drive. It goes right out to the street of about 750 feet that would take less time than another complex I had that I have to make 14 turns to get back into a corner on narrow streets. And as you're laying those hoses down the street, that's the time-consuming part of it. So the farther you have to go or the more turns you have to make makes a difference. And should you happen to have narrow roads and people

trying to get their cars or vehicles, other items out of the way to where it gets congested, that takes more time.

MR. KUSAMOTO: So hydrants located within the property would make your job in fighting fires a lot easier?

MR. HALBERSTADT: Generally, the Fire Code requires hydrants to be no more than 500 feet distance apart in residential areas, and so that's a lot closer than 1,000 feet.

SENATOR DUNN: Thank you.

MR. MURPHY: You would also see changes in access. Many of the parks have extremely narrow roads. And as the Assemblyman asked, what would one of the effects be? Better enforcement, in terms of access of emergency vehicles being able to get into these locations where they're very, very restricted.

SENATOR DUNN: Thank you, both of you.

Let me call up the next panel which consists of Steve Patterson, President, California Building Officials Association; Chief Tom Groseclose, City of Orange; and also Assistant Chief Patrick McIntosh, Orange County Fire Authority.

MR. STEVE PATTERSON: Good morning. Thank you. My name is Steve Patterson with California Building Officials and I want to thank you very much for the opportunity today. As we've said before, it's unfortunate circumstances and we are very supportive of the people involved.

We want to assure Senator Dunn and the committee that we will do everything possible to work with you and to help you find answers to these difficult questions any way that we possibly can. We do support the local involvement. The previous speakers were talking about switching from Title 25 to Title 19. We support that idea as well, local involvement with the local fire departments. We're very close partners with them, the building officials,

building departments, and fire departments work closely. The Building Codes and the Fire Codes have to relate and interact with each other.

With that in mind, we are supportive of that development continuing at the state level, that there is one body of codes, if you should say, so that they do interact with each other. We think the format that is best served is a current process that the codes go through, and that's the Building Standards Commission, where they have input and the development of the codes comes together as one whole body of codes. We are very much in favor of that.

On the technical areas, with regards to the incident or whatnot, we respect our fire department cohorts in the fact that what they do – so as far as California Building Officials, they are the experts in that field and we won't bore you with trying to give you testimony as to our knowledge in that area because we don't fight the fires. We deal with the buildings. But we are very supportive of the concept that manufactured housing must meet minimum standards, as well as regular, what you might call, regular housing stock. It's taken that step, the concepts that you've heard today, about smoke detectors and so many of the other things, are already in the codes for regular housing, if you want to use that term.

We support that concept of building that closer relationship which was referred to earlier in testimony, that if you put this into Title 19 and through the process that we've identified, you will get a family of codes that will work with each other.

Thank you.

MR. TOM GROSECLOSE: Good morning, Senators Dunn and Lowenthal, Committee Members. I'm Tom Groseclose. I'm a Division Chief and the Fire Marshal for the City of Orange.

SENATOR DUNN: Let me stop you for a second. Everybody can hear? Okay. I just wanted to make sure.

MR. GROSECLOSE: I've listened to everybody talk this morning address your group. There's some areas that I wanted to talk about. This is a very complex problem that we have. We have issues of water supply for these parks, distance to travel to the back of the parks, to the most remote mobilehome, the closeness of the buildings, the age of the park, turning radiuses to get your apparatus into the park; fire loading, the stuff that the people that live in the park are putting inside their homes, and there's another big factor called the "human factor", and that's been discussed as to the age of the occupants of the park – their agility, mental awareness – those are all factors that factor in.

Now the water supply in our City of Orange, we have eight mobilehome parks, and they range from having two parks that have no water supply, very old parks, to our newest park which has a hydrant system throughout the park. So you can drive through these parks. You can almost tell, just by driving through, what code they were built under. The oldest park just has single wides, very narrow, short turning radiuses, makes it very difficult to get back into that park with water.

I'd like to, I would agree with Chief Murphy and Chief Halberstadt about the recommendations for putting the code into Title 19, in the Fire Code, to make it a lot easier to enforce and to regulate, if at all possible, if we could come up with the funds to retrofit those parks that do not have the water supplies and public education for the people that live in those parks.

I'm open for questions, if anybody has any.

SENATOR DUNN: We'll finish the panel and then probably open it to questions.

MR. PATRICK McINTOSH: Thank you. Senator Dunn and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to be here today and for this process.

My name is Patrick McIntosh. I'm an Assistant Chief and the Fire Marshal for the Orange County Fire Authority. As a regional fire service agency, we serve 21 cities, any unincorporated areas of Orange County. Our service area covers 500 square miles here in the county with a population served of approximately 1.2 million citizens.

As you've heard, fires involving mobilehomes are challenging for fire protection agencies, due to the construction methods, combustible contents, proximity to adjoining structures, as you've heard, and oftentimes emergency access and water supply limitations. Additional fire risks associated with the age of many of these structures includes some deterioration, structural additions, awnings, decks, those types of things, and the fact that in many instances, as evidenced, I think, by the people in attendance today, many residents are elderly and may have limited mobility.

These conditions contribute to rapid spread of fire and the risk to life loss and also poses an increased risk to our firefighters. It is very rare in my experiences over 20 years, that when we respond to a mobilehome fire, that it's not fully involved. Usually, they are. They burn very rapidly.

Current regulations, as you've heard, do provide some difficulties in understanding where the ultimate authority rests for enforcement. That relates to Title 25, as you've heard, as well as Title 24, part 9, which is the California Fire Code. And you've heard the references to NFPA Standard 24 which is the standard for hydrant systems and a 1977 reference in Title 25 versus the 1995 adopted reference in the current edition of the California Fire Code.

It appears appropriate to me for the HCD regulations to simply reference Title 24, Part 9, which is the California Fire Code, and any local amendments thereto that local agencies might have as the applicable standard regarding fire hydrant emergency access requirements, and I think you've heard that from my colleagues who preceded me. In fact, the

document, section 901, actually has a reference to mobilehome parks. Again, it's the confusion and ambiguity relative to which code has precedence. The 1998 California Fire Code currently adopted by the state does in fact reference the most current edition of that NFPA 24, and that's the 1995 edition versus 1977, as you heard earlier in Title 25.

Additionally, there are standards in the California Fire Code, relative to fire flow and fire hydrant placement based upon construction types and those are contained in appendices 3(a) and 3(b) in the current addition of the California Fire Code that we enforce locally. In fact, Orange County Fire Authority, and the reason I mentioned earlier about local amendments being important, is we actually amend the California Fire Code to establish specific, ongoing maintenance and testing standards for privately owned fire hydrants, and there are many in commercial occupancies as well. When you drive through parking lots and see red fire hydrants, that's an indication that they're privately owned, and responsibility for maintenance rests with that property owner.

So we include things, such as the annual service and the flow testing, operation of the valves, the painting, the blue dots, as you've heard referenced here. In fact, within the past several months, Orange County Fire Authority piloted and now are spreading a program throughout all of our 21 cities to make contact with all of our mobilehome parks and the managers and to offer assistance in educating them as to the process to test and maintain the hydrants in their mobilehome parks, which includes going out to the park, being there with them as they open the hydrants, giving them directions relative to removal of weeds and other obstructions.

Again, as I said, it's currently being expanded in all of our jurisdictions. We expect to visit every single mobilehome park served by the Orange County Fire Authority no later than June 1 of this year. We also have senior citizen smoke detector programs and aggressive education programs. As my

colleagues indicated, you still have the human factor. We're still going to have fires.

The modification of Title 25, to reference, California Fire Code, Title 24, Part 9, for applicable standards appears to help resolve the major issues affecting future mobilehome parks relative to emergency access and water supply for fire fighting. With that addressed, by that reference and adoption, it would seem inappropriate to force local jurisdictions to assume enforcement of the entire Parks Act in order to address the fire and life safety needs and concerns that we have.

The tougher issue is the retroactive enforcement. We don't really impose that in other occupancies. And as you've heard, there are regulations relative to going back and making people do upgraded systems. However, due to the fire problems we have with mobilehomes and in parks and the significant potential for loss in life, I think I would be remiss as a fire service professional not to tell you that I would support any effort, as with any of the fire fighters here, that could help ensure proper water supplies and emergency access provided to those facilities. And we also recognize, however, that there is some potential for financial burdens placed on, hopefully not the residents who might be on fixed incomes, but potentially property owners. And we would hope, if an effort was moved forward, to require retroactive installation of fire hydrants, that we could come up with a companion program to help offset some of those financial hardships, if they can be proven by the people responsible for installation.

Maintenance is important. Adoption of regulations requiring establishment and maintenance standards improves their reliability. And I think, for peace of mind and for proper placement, that enforcement of the California Fire Code rests and should rest with the fire department, if we can have that authority in the parks. The burden for accomplishing that

maintenance rests with the property owner. We feel they need to be the ones that either do it or hire companies to do it for them.

I heard the question reference relative to pre-planning. The Orange County Fire Authority recognizes the risk within mobilehome parks. We have special area maps, as we call them, that identifies the street arrangements, the space and specific lot numbers, and the fire hydrant locations. We also utilize our computer-aided dispatch system to provide additional comments regarding hazards, for example, decreased water supply, or special needs of occupants, i.e., somebody that is immobile that we know we would have to rescue. Those are automatically transmitted through a computer to the screens in the fire engine to the fire fighters responding to the call.

I have to be honest. If we look to the future, perhaps the largest leap forward, in addition to adequate access and water and the ability to enforce, that could be taken in reducing the risk of fire spread and the loss of life in these types of occupancies, would be the requirement for all new manufactured homes to be provided with residential fire sprinkler systems. They're inexpensive; some are available now; and coupled with smoke detectors provide us the best defense possible.

The fire in the City of Compton was a tragedy. Our hearts certainly go out to the families and friends, to the City of Compton, and to the professional men and women in the Compton Fire Department who I know are grieving also. It doesn't matter how long you've been doing this job. When you lose a life, it takes its toll.

It's important to recognize today that the tragedy that occurred in Compton could happen in any community in California at any minute. And I hope that we never experience another loss of life. But my professional fear, and I'm sure that of my colleagues, is that we will. So I think recognizing the risks associated with these types of communities, I hope that you're able to

work toward what's improving their safety, and that makes this process and this hearing today critically important. And I, on behalf of our Fire Chief, Chip Prather, thank you for the opportunity for us to be here.

SENATOR DUNN: Thank you.

A quick question, if I may.

So I understand, if I was an owner of a park that had a hydrant system in it but I wanted it tested, can I contract with the Orange County Fire Authority for a fee to come and test that for me?

MR. McINTOSH: We don't have that system set up to do that right now. What we're doing and what our program is, is we're making contact right now with all of those park owners to actually go out, physically be on site with them to assist them in doing that process, assessing the needs, and putting them, if necessary, in contact with companies that do provide that service.

SENATOR DUNN: Okay. What you're saying is, you would accompany, you know, if I was the park owner, hired a private company to come and test my hydrant, you would come at the same time and just oversee it and offer suggestions and that sort of thing?

MR. McINTOSH: If a private company was to do it, we wouldn't feel we needed to be there. However, we would require them to provide documentation of their training and their ability to provide that service, as well as the records that came out of that inspection and maintenance program.

SENATOR DUNN: No questions?

Thank you. Thank you, all three of you.

We'll bring up our last panel for the morning, that is, Jack Kerin, Department of Housing and Community Development, Codes and Standards from Sacramento.

Jack.

And I think you were going to have some additional people with you to answer questions, I'm assuming.

MR. JACK KERIN: I have Sal Poidomani with me.

SENATOR DUNN: And the State Fire Marshal as well. Again, if they want to offer comments as well, that is certainly welcome.

Jack, we'll start with you. And again, speak right into that mike.

MR. JACK KERIN: Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee, my name is Jack Kerin. I'm representing the Department of Housing and Community Development. I've been with the Department Housing and Community Development since 1971. My current title is Field Operations Manager.

Thank you for inviting the Department to explore the issue with the Committee and to address some of the inconsistencies that exist in the current laws. I will testify that many of these requirements have evolved and changed over the past 40 years.

I'd like to commend Mr. John Tennyson on the summary that he did. He covered the issue fairly well, so I'll try not to repeat too much of that.

As you know, the Department administers the Mobilehome Parks Act, which includes the Mobilehome Park Inspection Program. Local jurisdictions can assume the enforcement responsibility upon notifying the Department within a 30-day period and proving that they had the responsibility and the ability to do that. HCD and local enforcement agencies are allowed to assess fees annually to provide the inspection services. And the Mobilehome Park Inspection Program began, or should I say, restarted in 1990 with the legislation AB 925 by at that time Assemblyman O'Connell and has recently been extended through Senate Bill 700.

The Mobilehome Parks Act did provide for inspection back in the early '70s but there was quite a long period of time there where there was no inspection. And since the inception of the inspection program, we have

received a great many of the local jurisdictions parks back for enforcement by HCD. In 1990, we had approximately 25 percent of the parks under state jurisdiction. Now we have approximately 66 percent, so the vast majority of the parks in the state are inspected by the Department.

As far as the requirements for hydrants in mobilehome parks, prior to 1961, there were no pre-emptive requirements. And as was testified to earlier, the El Rancho Mobilehome Park was built in the '30s, 1935, I think it was mentioned. It also is noted that the parent law prohibits retroactivity for requirements. So the vast majority of the parks that are out there are pre-1968. We've had some discussion on the various requirements of 1968 versus the standards, the NFPA standards of 1977 and the 1995 edition. The basic hydrant requirements are very similar. There are some differences in those standards, as has been noted.

1961 was the first pre-emptive standards and that only applied in mobilehome parks that had more than ten cabanas. The biggest change in the regulatory process was the 1968 requirements. Again, they were pre-emptive and they were for parks with 15 or more lots, and they also applied to any additional, addition to those parks, but they only applied to the additional spaces and not necessarily the original 14, for example, and they required fire hydrants within 500 feet, which is very similar to the current NFPA standards.

So from this point forward, there's been very little change. The regulations have been relocated and renumbered. Title 25, they were changed to the sections of 5620 and 5622, and the current regulations are found in the 1300 series, 1300 through 1312. At the same time, allowances have been made throughout the code for local conditions, if you will.

Many of the parks that we're looking at now that are in the cities of Garden Grove and other places were really out in the outlying areas. The water system that served them when they were built in the '40s and '50s are

certainly much smaller than is available now. And so that is another factor, that not only has it changed hands, as far as jurisdiction, who had jurisdiction, but what codes applied at the time they were built. But the conditions around the park and the density of the whole area, the complexion of the whole areas have changed in many cases.

Over the past 32 years, there's been a shift back and forth as to the enforcement agency – we've gone through almost a flip from 25 to 30 percent, to 70 percent, a reversal over what it was in 1990. So that's happened in the last ten years. Like I said earlier, most of the issues, as far as the information of what the codes are now and who has the enforcement responsibilities, has been very well covered, I think, by the prior speakers. So at this point, I would conclude my testimony and respond to any questions that the panel might have.

Yes, sir.

ASSEMBLYMEMBER LOWENTHAL: I have one question regarding this flip-flopping of responsibility and authority between HCD and the local agencies and understanding how they change.

I wonder, do you see any problem or would HCD have a problem with allowing local jurisdictions to assume fire safety authority without taking over all the inspection kinds of responsibilities from the state and mainly keeping some of inspections with the state as they elect to do but really delegating much more of the fire safety authority to local jurisdictions?

MR. KERIN: I think we've always, the Department's always been supportive of local enforcement of the entire Mobilehome Parks Act. Our position is that generally local enforcement agencies are closer to the issues and they can respond in all areas.

ASSEMBLYMEMBER LOWENTHAL: It's been a fiscal issue that the local authorities have not assumed that responsibility because of the fiscal issues involved?

MR. KERIN: I believe that that's a part of it. I'd also like to comment that the issue of retroactivity is a big issue in Title 25. Changing parks have already been done legally.

Currently, if the mobilehome park is under construction, even if it is under state jurisdiction, we will not issue a permit without the approval of the local fire department. That is part of our process and it's spelled out in the code that we do get the approval of the local fire department. But in the real world, there's not that many parks being built now or that have been built since 1968, for that matter. We have a large number of parks that have been around prior to these requirements, or they were located in areas where they didn't have adequate water supply and were actually allowed to have a different fire system installed, which the code provides. If you don't have a four-inch or six-inch water line to the facility, there were alternate approvals for private systems that were permitted. Those parks are now in the cities where there is a water system but that's not the way it was constructed.

I hope I answered your question.

MR. TENNYSON: One thing that's curious, and I wondered if you could explain why, even in those parks, a limited number of parks that were built after 1968, which had the hydrant requirement and the enforcement agency is required to adopt a maintenance plan for those parks, that HCD has none.

MR. KERIN: The only thing I could offer in that area is that, until the recent inspection program, we didn't have the resources to make maintenance inspections at all. We did not pick that up as part of the inspection program that we instituted in 1991. I would say, from that standpoint, there's a couple of issues.

One is, we don't have the, we've always relied in the past on the fire department to make those tests, and in many areas they used to. Some still do, as you've heard. That basically has been a resource issue.

Secondly, I don't know that we have, our people have ever been trained to do that. How do you measure the flow? What do you need to look for? I'm not sure that we have the expertise, and we just haven't done it.

SENATOR DUNN: Sal, Steve, any comments you guys want to add?

MR. SAL POIDOMANI: Good morning. My name is Sal Poidomani. I'm with the Department of Housing as well and I concur with Mr. Kerin's comments here. We've looked at two sides of the issue here. We're talking about fire hydrants in mobilehome parks, post-1968. We talked about flushing systems and conducting tests or checking to see the hydrants were operable and so forth. But I think the main issue here we're talking about is mobilehome parks prior to 1968. We have a mobilehome park that was inspected in 1935 where there were no hydrant requirements. I think that the focus should be not just in fire suppression but also in the fire prevention as it was mentioned this morning, that most of the fires occur within the mobilehome, whether it be in the furnace compartment, water heater, or electrical systems in the home. The best way of preventing a fire in these older mobilehomes built with the minimum standards, is to provide smoke detectors in mobilehomes.

Prior to 1971, mobilehomes were, not required to meet any fire standards or any structural standards, for that matter. It wasn't until September 15, 1971, when the law went into effect covering these structural systems and fire safety requirements. So homes constructed post-1971 were required to be provided with a smoke detector, either permanently wired or battery operated and also required the flame-spread limitations for interior wall covering. And then finally on June 15, 1976, when the federal Manufactured Housing and Construction Safety Standards went into effect, those standards were updated even more so that water heaters, furnace compartments, and areas that are subject to threat of fire were required to be

covered with materials that had either a 25 flame spread or less or a 50 flame spread or less, including the walls and floors.

So we're looking at two different constructions. But as I see it, the focus should be, when we're dealing with parks that were pre-68, that that's where I believe the imminent threat of fire is more likely to occur. And I believe that the fire prevention method of providing smoke detectors, I think that should be the highest priority as well as fire extinguishing equipment. Now we can't impose current regulations in those mobilehome parks, but we certainly can go back and at least provide some type of fire prevention measures that are relevant to those standards to which those parks were constructed and those dates.

MR. TENNYSON: I have one more question relating to enforcement. I'll ask Mr. Kerin to address one of them and ask Mr. Poidomani to address another.

I was in the El Rancho Park yesterday, and the debris from the two mobilehomes that are totally destroyed is still there, six weeks later. What steps are you taking as the enforcement agency, and you're still the enforcement agency, to have that debris as a public nuisance removed from the park? It's a continual reminder to those people, the shocking incident, and the disaster that occurred there. What are you doing to have the operator of the park remove that debris?

MR. POIDOMANI: Yes. We have since then, I believe two, two-and-a-half weeks ago, sent in one of our inspectors and we wrote up a notice to the park owner to abate the damaged mobilehomes. I believe Mr. Joseph Corda, who was the owner – was provided a copy of that report.

There was a time since then that nothing was being done. According to Mr. Corda, they were dealing with insurance companies assessing the damage, and also we were waiting for the final report from the fire department, but they have been notified that they are responsible to abate

the nuisance. And I can certainly understand that allowing the damage to remain does pose a real bad memory, and I can appreciate the residents there looking at it every day, but the owner has been notified to abate the fire-damaged homes.

SENATOR DUNN: Any other questions?

ASSEMBLYMEMBER LOWENTHAL: Just a follow up.

What does that mean, the owner? How long does the owner have to comply with this?

MR. POIDOMANI: Generally, when we do go to fine anybody for a violation, if it's something that provides a safety hazard to the residents, we require that they be corrected immediately or within five days or where the damage does not pose a health and safety hazard, we can extend that to 30 days, provided it's well protected and barricaded and so forth. And I think also, in situations like this, when we have different agencies involved conducting investigations, such as the fire department and local or the insurance companies, we allow a little bit of time to do that as well. But I think, as far as I know, those investigations have been concluded, and the fire-damaged homes should be removed.

MR. TENNYSON: Do you think we'll see some action on that in, say, two weeks?

MR. POIDOMANI: I sure hope so. I spoke to Mr. Corda yesterday and reminded him that the area needs to be cleaned up.

SENATOR DUNN: Okay. Any further questions? None?

I want to thank the three of you very much for your testimony this morning.

Steve, did you have anything you wanted to add?

MR. STEVE VIERO: No.

SENATOR DUNN: You're the lucky one, I guess, to say nothing.

That brings us to the end of our panel presentations. Assemblymember Lowenthal, any concluding comments from your perspective?

ASSEMBLYMEMBER LOWENTHAL: Well, first, I want to compliment all the presenters. I think we've heard, first, the overarching concerns about fire safety from the park owners, from the homeowners, from the building side, from the fire services. And I think out of this, we have seen some of the flaws; and we know that, on the one hand, we are talking about the tremendous need to protect and enhance affordable housing in the state. That's the highest priority. On the other hand, we're talking about good safety of our residents and how we're going to ensure that residents are safe and the role that the state can play, and so I'm going to take this information back and work with Senator Dunn, work with Senator Alarcon, and see what we can do.

SENATOR DUNN: Thank you, Alan.

Just a couple of comments of my own. I also want to extend a thank you to all the residents, the resident organization representatives, to the park owners, the park owner representatives that testified. I know some of you have come a long way to present your view of this very difficult problem this morning, and we appreciate that very, very much.

From my own perspective, perhaps the most telling testimony this morning for me came, of course, from our fire authorities, our fire departments, and the information that they provided and their perspective. Obviously, it is their job to be most concerned about these issues, and they have, in my view, the most expertise. So I think their voice spoke extraordinarily loud this morning, and I want to thank the fire department representatives, fire authority representatives, for again taking time out of your busy day to come here as well.

It's a very, very difficult problem. Everyone in this room knows it. No one wants to foot the bill for the solution of the problem. We understand that

as well. Somewhere, somehow though, we're going to have to come up with a solution. And as I commented at the outset this morning, I would like to do that in a cooperative fashion with park owners, residents, law enforcement, fire authority folks, everybody at that table, and do it in a way that we all give a little bit, to bring resolution to this extraordinarily difficult problem.

I also want to extend a thank you to my staff, Carina Franck who's over there seated by the door; Beatrice who was here this morning checking everybody in; our Sergeant-at-Arms, John, Leroy, who had also come a long way to assist us this morning; Sal for his videotaping this morning. Thank you very much for providing that service as well. Of course, again, to the City of Garden Grove for providing the facilities and our coffee this morning. I also want to extend another thank you to Pat Neal who is Deputy Director of Housing.

Pat, thank you very much for taking time from your busy schedule to be here.

It shows that the Department of Housing cares very, very much about this issue with an individual as high ranking as Pat Neal would be here today and here only to listen. If you notice, she didn't ask for time to speak. She only came here to listen.

Also, thank you to Senator Alarcon's office, to the Senator, himself, to his staff who is here; to Assemblymember Alan Lowenthal who came a long way, and the Housing staff from the Assembly side; to Assemblymember Lou Correa's staff who was here; and also to Chuck Taylor from Senator Karnette's office. Thank you very, very much. I understand from Assemblyman Carl Washington's office, we have some staff members as well. Thank you for your interest and your concern as we together try to bring this to resolution.

And finally, and perhaps most importantly, thank each and every one of you for coming and attending this as we now start to focus in and resolve this very difficult problem.

Thank you, everyone. (Applause)

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SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

SUMMARY of the TESTIMONY

The testimony of witnesses, from mobilehome owners and park owners to representatives of local government, local fire agencies and the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) is summarized as follows:

A few residents who live in the El Rancho park in Compton, the location of the December fire, testified about, and pleaded for help with, a number of park problems, in addition to the problem of fire hydrants that did not work, including difficulties with the manager who hadn't distributed smoke alarms to residents which the park owner had provided. Homeowners from other parks also testified about problems in parks that have hydrants, including a park that allegedly locks the gates at night making it difficult for the fire department to get in, or where the fire hydrants aren't maintained. Some homeowners claimed that no one, neither HCD or local fire departments, checks the park hydrants to see that they work. One resident said hydrants in his park hadn't been checked in 9 years.

The president of a mobilehome owners group spoke about the lack of water pressure and corroded pipes in older parks and the need to test for water pressure as well as the functioning of the hydrants. He called for a major upgrade of the park infrastructure for water and fire protection. Another homeowner representative called for a survey of the extent of the problem and a task force of homeowner, industry and fire officials to make recommendations on how to deal with it. A third homeowner association officer testified that a local survey in her area revealed that many parks either don't have hydrants, don't have adequate hydrants, or don't have adequately maintained hydrants. In an emergency, finding the hydrants, overgrown with bushes or weeds, is also a problem in some parks, she claimed. Both major state mobilehome owner organizations agreed that money for any upgrading of fire protection and fire hydrants in mobilehome parks, as a matter of public health and safety, should be provided by the state, in order to avoid the cost being passed on to mobilehome owners by the park owners.

Park owners and their representatives who spoke emphasized that fire safety in mobilehome parks is a problem with the homes, not the parks. Older mobilehomes built in the 1950's and '60's with interior wood paneling painted with lacquer, some with aluminum wiring, are more fire-prone than the newer HUD-code homes with drywall construction. Insurance companies, they say, are interested in homes, not the parks, in rating for fire insurance purposes. Park owners cited a Foremost Insurance study that pinpointed inadequate home maintenance and such hazards as faulty furnaces, flues, space heaters, appliances, stoves and electrical systems as the number one cause of fires. The need to educate mobilehome owners in maintaining these systems and installing and using smoke alarms and fire extinguishers was also emphasized.

Park owners also suggested that current Civil Code laws allowing homeowners to keep their homes in the parks upon a resale should be changed. Older homes, they say, should be phased out of the park on resale and replaced with new HUD-code homes as a means of improving fire safety in the parks. Suggestions for rehab programs were not looked upon favorably, unless the funds go for the 'proper purpose' of replacing the home rather than rehabilitating an old one.

One park owner attorney contended that legislation to require older parks to retrofit hydrants would not only be ineffectual but questionably legal, in addition to allegedly running afoul of requirements of Proposition 218, which requires voter approval of certain fees imposed by local governments.

Local fire officials who testified generally agreed that adequate water supply and the need for greater local enforcement authority to avoid future fire tragedies in mobilehome parks are important. Many cited a number of factors important not only in preventing fires put stopping them from spreading. The list included problems with what people keep in their homes (fire loading), education, fire extinguishers and even, according to one official, the need for fire sprinklers in new homes. The ability of persons to get out is also important – early warning systems such as smoke alarms, burglar bars detachable from the inside, exits from the home that are usable and not blocked. But once a fire is started, it's the fire department's job to put it out, and as one fire official put it, there are basically two problems faced by fire departments in putting out fires: time and water supply. A typical fire pumper holds 500 gallons that is good for 4 minutes with one line and 2 minutes with two lines. Hence, water supply, availability of working hydrants, ability to easily find the hydrants, distance to the back of the park, closeness of the homes, access by fire equipment within the park, and turning radius for equipment are all important considerations.

One fire official claimed that in establishing ratings, contrary to the previous testimony of park owners, insurers are not only concerned about the homes but also the park water and fire hydrant systems, especially a schedule for testing and maintenance of hydrants that enable the fire department to more quickly put out a fire and keep it from spreading. Several fire officials testified that hydrants in parks are only effective if there is a means or system to assure they are tested and maintained. One deputy chief said that the fire department's job should be to enforce the requirements but not to physically maintain the park hydrants. That, he said, is the park owner's responsibility. The fire department can show them how to do it if necessary, or they can hire private companies that specialize in flow testing and maintenance of the hydrants. The fire department's job in this respect, he said, should be one of oversight, to make sure that maintenance is being done.

As such, most fire representatives advocated that fire code enforcement be separated from Title 25, and that locals be given authority to enforce local fire code requirements in mobilehome parks without having to take on enforcement of the entire Mobilehome Parks Act. One official bluntly stated that a 7-year park inspection cycle, required under the Parks Act, is inadequate for fire protection purposes and compounds problems that exist, making it more expensive to fix them in the long run.

The Department of Housing (HCD) representatives chimed in with a history of the Mobilehome Parks Act (Title 25). Prior to 1961, parks were built to whatever codes applied at the time they were built under local control. Many parks built at that time were in rural areas or on the edge of town. Fire standards were not those required in more urbanized settings. The state attempted to standardize code requirements for mobilehomes in 1961 and later in 1968, but the new standards

were not made retroactive to older parks. The 1968 changes were the biggest – applying to parks with 15 or more lots. Parks that are built today, according to the HCD representative, will not be issued an HCD permit without approval of the local fire department. But HCD does not enforce existing maintenance requirements for fire hydrants in parks under its jurisdiction, he said, because HCD does not have the resources, expertise or training to do so.

CONCLUSION

The hearing clearly brings to light that much needs to be done to improve fire safety in California's 5,000 mobilehome parks, particularly older mobilehome parks built before 1968.

There are a number of issues that could be addressed: One is where the fires start, the greater susceptibility of older pre-HUD code homes to fire. This would include the possibility of rehabilitating or replacing the homes with newer homes that are more fire resistant. There is also the maintenance of the homes, or lack thereof, that not only involve electrical, heating and cooking systems, but the tendency of some persons to add to the problem by storing flammable materials in, around and under the homes. The need to assure that exits are clear and that burglar bars are detachable from the inside are important, as is the need for smoke alarms, fire extinguishers, and perhaps even fire sprinklers in many cases. Education is of primary importance in this regard. But in addition to where the fires start and how to get the people out is the issue of keeping the fire from spreading . . . the ability of the fire department to put out the fire as quickly as possible, which is not only a matter of response time but having the right equipment, including an adequate water system nearby, to fight it.

The hearing highlighted not only problems of inadequate fire hydrant and water systems in many parks but lack of enforcement of fire requirements in many parks due to two sets of standards and convoluted laws that exempt the oldest parks with the most problems and do not give the state agency (HCD) responsible for overseeing mobilehome parks the resources to do the job. HCD doesn't even have reliable information on the ages of parks, homes, parks that have fire hydrant systems and parks that don't, or a fire history of the parks over which it has jurisdiction. Even in parks that are required to have hydrants and maintain them under HCD jurisdiction, HCD has no enforcement mechanism to assure those hydrants are maintained. Meanwhile, the fire agencies that are required to put out the fires are hamstrung by a 34-year old law that requires them to enforce all of the provisions of the Mobilehome Parks Act before they can enforce their fire code requirements in those parks. Otherwise they must leave fire code enforcement to HCD under the weaker Title 25 standards, and enforced by HCD only on a 7-year inspection cycle.

The following steps should be taken within the next 2 years to address these problems:

1) Require HCD to conduct a statistical survey of all mobilehome parks in the state to determine their ages, their fire histories, the types of water and fire hydrant systems, if any, in each park, and the adequacy of those systems, with a report to the Legislature on its findings;

2) Require HCD to enforce its own regulations for maintenance and periodic inspection of fire hydrants in parks that have hydrants, with a report to the Legislature within one year on its progress;

3) Modify the existing 34-year old law to allow local governments to enforce their fire code requirements in mobilehome parks without having to assume enforcement of the entire Mobilehome Parks Act. This provision currently serves as a disincentive to local governments to enforce fire code requirements in mobilehome parks;

4) Seek funding through state housing bonds or other means for providing low-interest loans to homeowners, in coordination with local government programs where they exist, to rehabilitate mobilehomes subject to health and safety or fire code violations or replace them with newer manufactured homes;

5) Seek funding through state housing bonds or other means for providing low-interest loans to mobilehome park owners, in coordination with local governments, to rehabilitate or retrofit park fire safety infrastructure, including park water supply systems and park fire hydrant systems;

6) Encourage local governments and HCD to work together in establishing priorities and procedures in dealing with fire safety problems in mobilehome parks, including park owner and homeowner education.

# # #

APPENDIX

(Related Materials and Information)

FEBRUARY 4, 2000

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3 Die in Compton Fire as Hydrants Unable to Work

■ Tragedy: Mobile home fire kills two children and grandmother. Lack of water delayed firefighters.

By KENNETH REICH, Times Staff Writer

A woman and two of her grandchildren died early Sunday in a fire in a Compton mobile home park, where firefighters arriving on the scene found the hydrants were useless because they were not hooked up to the city's water main.

Compton officials said Sunday the problems with the hydrants was frustrating to them but did not cost the three victims their lives. They said that rigging up a supply of water from a city water main 1,200 feet away resulted in a delay of about five to nine minutes.

Veronica Lopez is consoled by her son after losing two of her three children in the fire.
PAUL MORSE, Los Angeles Times

Some residents, however, said that the delay was 20 minutes and that they could hear screams coming from the victims when firefighters arrived.

"The firetrucks were here, but there was no water," said park resident Alejandra Ayon, whose mobile home was partially burned.

Compton Mayor Omar Bradley and the owner of the property blamed a jurisdictional dispute with state authorities for the lack of water at the El Rancho Mobile Home Park, located in the 16000 block of Atlantic Drive.

They said the state's Department of Housing and Community Development had intervened to prevent the city eight months ago from requiring that the hydrants be hooked up to the water main.

The coroner's office hadn't released the names of the dead by late Sunday. Residents and family members identified them as Saveriana Santana, 53, and her grandchildren, Christian, 10, and Veronica, 8, whose last names they were unsure of.

The children were survived by their mother, Veronica Lopez, and brother, Sostenes.

(73)

Two neighbors were treated for smoke inhalation. The origin of the fire, which destroyed two homes and damaged a third, remained unknown.

Trailer park owner Joseph Corda, of Gilbert, Ariz., gave to The Times a copy of an April 13 letter from the state housing department contending Compton had no authority to require the hookup and saying it was up to the state agency to issue a permit for it.

Bradley referred to this letter--and a continuing dispute over it between city and state officials--in assessing blame for the initial inability to fight the 1 a.m. blaze.

A spokeswoman for the state housing department, Alana Golden, declined immediate comment on the dispute but said an inspector from the department's Riverside office has been ordered to pull the official files for inspection and go to the site of the fire today.

Altogether, two mobile homes and part of another were consumed by the time firemen could rig lines from the city's water main to the park, home to several hundred residents.

Meeting with reporters at the site, Bradley expressed great frustration over the failure to finish the hydrant hookup, and residents said a fire five years ago in the park had also found water lines empty.

"We were compelled to do something, but the state wouldn't let us," Bradley said.

He said the city passed an ordinance two years ago requiring a hookup and since the state letter "we've been conducting an investigation" in trying to resolve the matter.

The owner, Corda, reached by telephone, said he had already spent $50,000 installing water lines and four hydrants inside the park, but halted work after the April 13 letter form the state out of fear of not having the proper permits for the hookup.

Corda said he had been told by the city a water pumper could be used to fight a fire if one should break out. But no pumper showed up Sunday, he said.

The letter from the Housing and Community Development Department that Corda faxed to The Times was addressed to a lobbyist for mobile home owners that Corda had asked to look into the situation over the hydrants. It was signed by Jack L. Kerin, a field operations manager.

In it, Kerin said he had reviewed state law and "the city has no authority to impose such requirements in an existing mobile home park.

"I might add that if the park owner should choose to upgrade the fire protection system in their park they would need the approval of the local fire department, but this department would be the agency to issue the permit and inspect the work," he said.

"I have discussed this with the department's Legal Affairs Office and they concur with my interpretation of the Mobile Home Parks Act."

Corda also faxed copies of correspondence between his lawyers and the city, in which the civil servants said they were trying to work out a solution with the state. Corda said he hesitated to go forward without such a solution, fearing liability if he did it the wrong way.

Residents interviewed in the park were angry.

Maria Hernandez, who said she pays $500 a month rent for the mobile home in which she resides, said work had begun with the laying of pipes and installation of

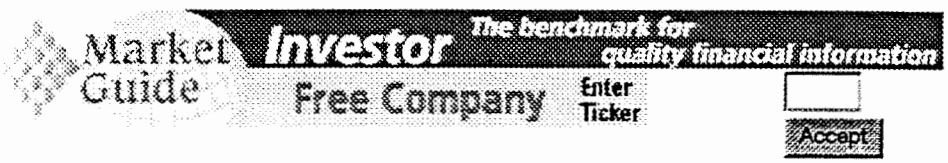
hydrants about a year ago.

The police ticket residents for parking in fire lanes inside the park, she said, but no water is running through the pipes, which are separate from smaller pipes carrying household water.

"Something has to be done--right now," Hernandez said.

She and other residents told of trying vainly to fight the fire with their garden hoses, connected to the household water lines.

Staff writer Carl Ingram in Sacramento contributed to this report.



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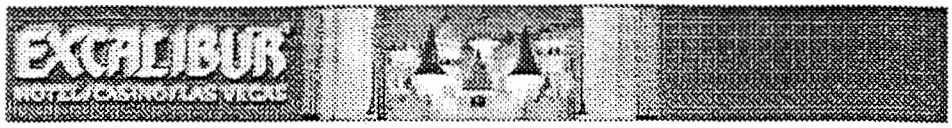

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Compton Vows to Connect Fire Hydrants

■ Safety: City officials say they'll put aside financial dispute and hook up outlets that proved useless in fighting blaze that killed three Sunday.

By JOSH MEYER, Times Staff Writer

Compton officials pledged Monday to hook up fire hydrants at a mobile home park where a woman and two of her grandchildren died in a weekend fire, with a city spokesman saying the city needed to "do what is morally right" and to sort out legal and financial concerns later.

Outraged residents of the El Rancho Mobile Home Park on Atlantic Avenue said firefighters could not properly fight the fire, which broke out just after 1 a.m. Sunday, because the hydrants at the park were not hooked up to the city's water main.

As a result, residents said, they watched as the fire destroyed one mobile home and then a second one, while firefighters scrambled to tap a fire hydrant on a street 1,200 feet away.

On Monday, the victims of the fire were identified as Saveriana Santana, 53, her grandson Christian Alejandro del Campo, 10, and her granddaughter Veronica del Campo, 8. The two children were visiting Santana, having come from Pacoima for the Christmas holidays with their brother and mother.

The hookup of the fire hydrants has been a source of dispute for the past several years. Compton officials had been trying to force the owners of the mobile home park to install hydrants, citing city requirements, and to pay for them to be hooked up to the city's water main.

The mobile home park owner paid $50,000 to install four hydrants, but contended that it was the city's responsibility to pay for the hookups, which they estimated would cost $17,000.

As that dispute continued without resolution, the state Department of Housing and Community Development intervened at the owner's request eight months ago, saying the city could not require him to pay for hooking up the fire hydrants because the city does not have jurisdiction.

El Rancho is on land that is governed by the state Mobile Home Parks Act, which does not require parks to have fire hydrants, housing department spokeswoman Alana Golden said Monday.

Compton officials said Monday the city could no longer afford to wait for the dispute to be settled.

"The exigent circumstances [of the fire] raised the issue, and elected officials and administrators had a feeling that something ought to be done immediately," Compton spokesman Frank Wheaton said late Monday. "We will pass a resolution to do whatever is necessary to give those citizens water."

Wheaton said Mayor Omar Bradley met with City Council members and Fire Department officials throughout the day Monday, and all agreed to use city funds to hook up the hydrants. The city will then see if other trailer parks within the city need hydrants.

"We want to do what is morally right, right now," Wheaton said. He said an emergency motion to pay for the hydrant hookups would be introduced at the council's meeting today.

Acting Fire Chief Frank Sotelo conceded Monday that firefighters were hampered in their efforts to fight the fire, even with the 1,000 gallons contained in the two pumper trucks that responded within minutes of the first call.

But Sotelo said a preliminary investigation indicates that the problems with the hydrants did not cost the lives of the three victims.

"At the time of our arrival, it was fully involved," Sotelo said of the mobile home. "It was too far gone for that. There was nothing we could do."

Martin del Campo, one of the survivors of the fire, appeared to agree with Sotelo's assessment.

An articulate 11-year-old, Martin was sleeping in the tiny mobile home with his mother, grandmother, brother, sister and two men when he awoke to the smell of fire. He heard his mother, Veronica Lopez, begin screaming and banging on doors to get everyone out of the unit.

Almost immediately, after feeling a whoosh of hot air around his head, Martin said, he broke out a window and helped push his mother to safety, even as her hair was on fire.

"Half the house was burning when I jumped out," he said in an interview. "Within three minutes, all the house was burning."

Fire investigators from Compton and Los Angeles County were seeking to pinpoint the cause of the blaze, which Martin said started in the kitchen.

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Compton Reasserts Control Over Mobile Home Parks

■ Government: In wake of fatal fire, council rescinds 1982 resolution that ceded jurisdiction to the state. Inspection of the facilities is planned.

By JOSH MEYER, Times Staff Writer

The Compton City Council unanimously approved an emergency measure Wednesday to reclaim jurisdiction over mobile home parks within its boundaries, saying the move is necessary to prevent fires like the one that killed a woman and two of her grandchildren last weekend.

The council action rescinds a 1982 resolution that ceded control over the city's dozen or so mobile home parks to the state Housing and Community Development Department.

Starting Monday, Compton fire and building inspectors will visit mobile home parks within the city limits to determine how many are not hooked up to hydrants. Fire Department Battalion Chief James Murphy said only two of the parks are believed to have working hydrants.

The city's action comes three days after Saveriana Santana, 53, died in a fast-moving blaze at El Rancho Mobile Home Park, along with grandson Christian Alejandro del Campo, 10, and granddaughter Veronica del Campo, 8.

Firefighters were hampered in battling the blaze Sunday because the four hydrants recently installed at the park were not hooked up to the city's water main, in part due to a three-way dispute among the mobile home park owner, the city and the state.

The firefighters ultimately hooked their hoses to a hydrant about 1,200 feet from the mobile home, which was destroyed in the blaze along with an adjacent unit.

Murphy said the mobile home did not have working smoke detectors, which gave the fire extra time to spread. Seven people were sleeping in the home when the fire broke out. The children's mother and brother survived, along with Santana's boyfriend and another guest who was sleeping in the living room.

Inspectors also will check mobile homes for smoke detectors, as well as the safety of metal security bars on windows, Murphy said. After the citywide inspections, officials will decide whether to require owners of the parks to install working fire hydrants and smoke detectors.

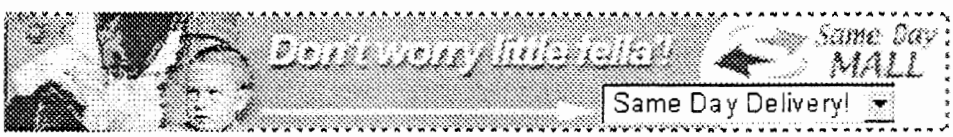
Since El Rancho Mobile Home Park owner Joseph Corda put in the hydrants, Compton has been trying to get him to pay about $17,000 to hook them up to city water mains. Corda spent $50,000 installing the hydrants and said the city should pay for the hookups.

The state housing department then interceded at Corda's request, saying the city couldn't force him to pay for the hookups since it no longer had jurisdiction over mobile home parks.

In the wake of the fatal fire, Compton officials said Monday that they would pay for the El Rancho hookups. But city spokesman Frank Wheaton said Wednesday that the council didn't vote to provide the money because Corda volunteered Tuesday to cover the cost, not knowing the city's position. Corda said Wednesday that he had agreed to pay on the presumption that the city wasn't going to. Now, he said, the city should keep its word and fund the hookups.

Wheaton said he hadn't heard of Corda's reluctance. "I'm sure the city will be proactive and will make certain the hydrants are hooked up," Wheaton said. He said the hookups could be performed as early as next week.

The investigation into the cause of the fire is almost complete, Murphy said, adding that the blaze started in the kitchen area. "We feel comfortable the fire was accidental," he said.



COMPTON FIRE DEPARTMENT
FIRE INVESTIGATION UNIT
FIRE INVESTIGATION REPORT

FIRE INVESTIGATION:

16002 South Atlantic Avenue--Space 25C

SUMMARY:

On Sunday, December 19, 1999, at approximately 0103 hours, a fire burned a structure (mobile home) located at 16002 South Atlantic Avenue--Space 25C, Compton, California. The seven occupants, Mr. Herberdo Romero, Ms. Severiana Santana Velasco (female, hispanic, adult, with a date of birth of December 21, 1946), Ms. Veronica Lopez Santana (female, hispanic, adult, with a date of birth of October 09, 1970), Mr. Carlos Estrada (male, hispanic, adult, with a date of birth of July 20, 1975), and three children, Sostenes Martin DelCampo, Jr. (male, hispanic, juvenile, with a date of birth of November 04, 1988), Christian Martin DelCampo (male, hispanic, juvenile, with a date of birth of March 06, 1989), and Veronica Martin DelCampo (female, hispanic, juvenile, with an unknown date of birth), were in the home at the time of the fire.

On Sunday, December 19, 1999, from 0159 through 1545 hours, I, Investigator K. Johnson, with the assistance of Fire Marshal M. Porter, Investigator K. Wright, Investigator L. Guerin, Montebello Fire Departments, Fire Investigation Units, Investigator D. France, and Investigator C. Wells, and Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, Arson Units, Special Agent C. White, conducted an on-scene fire investigation. After the on-scene fire investigation, it was determined that the cause of the fire was undetermined.

NOTIFICATION:

On Sunday, December 19, 1999, at approximately 0159 hours, I, Investigator K. Johnson, was contacted by Downey Fire Department Dispatch, address of 12222 Paramount Boulevard, Downey, California, telephone number of (562) 904-7313, in reference to a structure (mobile home) fire. Dispatch stated that there were fire suppression units at the scene of the structure (mobile home) fire located at 16002 South Atlantic Avenue--Space 25C, Compton, California.

Dispatch stated that the fire was reported at 0103 hours. Dispatch requested assistance for the investigation.

ON-SCENE FIRE INVESTIGATION:

On Sunday, December 19, 1999, at approximately 0237 hours, I, Investigator K. Johnson, arrived at the fire scene. Upon my arrival, fire suppression crews were still extinguishing the structure (mobile home) fire. Upon my arrival, I, Investigator K. Johnson, made contact with Battalion Chief L. Hall, and Fire Marshal M. Porter, prior to conducting an on scene investigation. Scene security was handled by Compton Fire Departments, Fire Investigation Unit, and Compton Police Department.

Statements of Fire Department Personnel-

Statements of Fire Chief F. Sotelo-

On December 19, 1999, I, Investigator K. Johnson, interviewed Fire Chief F. Sotelo, at the fire scene.

Fire Chief Sotelo stated that an unknown person stated to him, that the occupants of structure (mobile home) involved in fire had been having problems with their electrical.

Statements of Battalion Chief L. Hall-

On December 19, 1999, I, Investigator K. Johnson, interviewed Battalion Chief L. Hall, at the fire scene.

Battalion Chief Hall stated that when he arrived on the scene, he found a structure (mobile home) fully involved with fire, with flames showing from all windows. Battalion Chief Hall stated that the fire had communicated to a second trailer, prior to a water supply problem occurring. Battalion Chief Hall made a request for an investigator to respond for cause and origin determination.

Statements of Captain W. Roberson-

On December 19, 1999, I, Investigator K. Johnson, interviewed Captain W. Roberson, at the fire scene.

Captain Roberson stated that when he arrived on the scene, he found a structure (mobile home) fully involved with fire, with flames showing from all windows.

ON-SCENE FIRE INVESTIGATION (continued):

Building Construction of Involved Structure-

The structure (mobile home) involved with fire was located at 16002 South Atlantic Avenue--Space 25C, Compton, California, with the front door being located near the north east corner of the structure (mobile home), making the front of the structure (mobile home) facing north. The structure (mobile home) consisted of one single wide mobile home, with an addition placed on/near the south east corner of the structure (mobile home), and a carport structure located on/near the north east corner of the structure (mobile home). Under the carport structure was a metal shed, which housed numerous household appliances, and a large amount of combustibles.

The structure (mobile home) appeared to have been installed correctly, mounted upon the jack stands, which were discovered during the investigation. The structure (mobile home) was consistent with other mobile home construction, including the lightweight construction, and combustible interiors, and corrugated aluminum exterior siding.

The electrical meter and a single master electrical breaker-located in a small electrical panel, natural gas meter, and water valves are located outside the structure, on the south west corner of the property, and appeared to be in good working order. An additional electrical breaker panel was located in the structure, in the south west bedroom, which consisted of a small electrical panel containing four individual electrical breakers.

Perimeter Search of the Fire Scene-

On December 19, 1999, I conducted a perimeter search of the areas adjacent to the structure (mobile home) involved in fire, and discovered no additional evidence.

The perimeter examination also revealed the extent of the damage, which was total destruction of the structure (mobile home), addition, and the carport structure. The remaining pieces of the structure (mobile home) included the main steel beams that supported the structure (mobile home), the steel members that formed the trailer tongue, the steel members that formed the axles, and the actual axles. In addition to the above mentioned steel, which remained, there were some large wood beams that ran the length of the structure (mobile home), and small portions of the corrugated aluminum exterior siding.

ON-SCENE FIRE INVESTIGATION (continued):

Interior Examination of the Involved Structure-

Point of Origin-

Investigation of the structure (mobile home) began with a physical evaluation of the remainder of the structure. This evaluation began in an area with the least amount of damage. Due to the extensive damage, including the consumption of the floor structure; the deepest, and lowest point of char occurred in or about the kitchen/dining room/living room area, and specifically, an area on the eastern wall of the structure (mobile home). In this location, it was determined that an overstuff chair was located approximately thirty feet from the north wall of the structure (mobile home).

Cause and Determination-

Investigation of the structure (mobile home) began with an evaluation of the possible cause. The following natural causes of fire were eliminated, due to a lack of conditions which are conducive to these environments, including lightning, static electricity, and/or spontaneous combustion. The following mechanical causes were evaluated, and eliminated due to either good working order, and/or no significant signs of failure: electrical motors (a motor was found in debris, in the kitchen; a motor was found in the original heating blower unit, in the bedroom), refrigerator, sewing machine, and a clothes washing machine, which was outside, under the carport structure. Additional equipment that was evaluated, and eliminated included, the stove. Additionally, the associated gas piping and valves, were evaluated, and eliminated due to either good working order, and/or no significant signs of failure. Additionally, the structures (mobile home) electrical system, including the panel box, and wiring, which all showed signs of exterior heat, were evaluated, and eliminated due to either good working order, and/or no significant signs of failure. Also, much of the structures (mobile home) electrical wiring was still in tact, despite the intense heat. Additionally, there were no signs of any equipment being overheated, emitting sparks, and/or backfiring. There also were no signs of explosions. Further evaluation of the kitchen area, and stove, found that there were no signs of cooking occurring at the time of the fire. Further investigation, including the elimination of flammable liquids, through the use of an accelerant detection canine, and the lack of any suspects, and/or motives, was able to eliminate arson, as a possible cause of the fire.

Conclusion-

Finally, the investigation was able to eliminate all accidental causes except smoking materials, and was also able to eliminate arson as a cause; and the point of origin was determined to be an area located on the east wall of the main structure (mobile home), approximately thirty feet south of the north wall of the main structure (mobile home). This area would be known as a kitchen/dining room/living room, and there was an overstuff chair located at this point.

INTERVIEWS:

Statements of Mr. Herberdo Romero-

On December 19, 1999, I, Investigator K. Johnson, with the assistance of CPD Officer Verdugo, interviewed Mr. Herberdo Romero, with a date of birth of July 24, 1952, at the fire scene. Mr. Romero lived at 16002 South Atlantic Avenue--Space 25C, Compton, California, the structure involved with fire. Mr. Romero will be residing with the occupants located at 16002 South Atlantic Avenue--Space 15B, Compton, California.

Mr. Romero stated that he was at the home at the time of the incident. Mr. Romero stated that his residence was the unit that was involved with fire. Mr. Romero stated that he was the boyfriend of Ms. Severiana Santana Velasco (deceased), and that they were in bed, in the south eastern bedroom, at the time of the fire. Mr. Romero stated that at about 2230 hours, the two of them had gotten up to get a snack, cookies and milk, and a bologna sandwich, and rechecked the candle in the kitchen at that time. Mr. Romero stated that everyone else was in the house and in their respective bedrooms, and the front door was locked. Mr. Romero stated that the two of them then returned to bed, and the trailer was in a normal condition. Mr. Romero stated that there was no heater in the trailer, and that everyone wore extra clothing to bed, and used extra blankets.

Mr. Romero stated that when the fire was discovered, he and Ms. Severiana Santana Velasco (deceased), crawled on the ground, from the bedroom, toward the front door, located adjacent to the kitchen, to escape. Mr. Romero stated that the smoke was dark and had banked down to within a couple of feet of the floor. Mr. Romero stated that there was no smoke detector within the trailer.

Statements of Ms. Veronica Lopez Santana-

On December 19, 1999, I, Investigator K. Johnson, with the assistance of CPD Officer Verdugo, interviewed Ms. Veronica Lopez Santana, with a date of birth of October 09, 1970, and a California drivers license number of A5574907, at the fire scene. Ms. Santana lives at 23342 Valencia Boulevard, Canyon Country, California, 91355, but was visiting her mother, Ms. Severiana Santana Velasco (deceased), when the fire occurred.

Ms. Santana stated that she was at the home at the time of the incident. Ms. Santana stated that she was the daughter of Ms. Severiana Santana Velasco (deceased), and that she and her three children were in bed, in the north western bedroom, at the time of the fire. Ms. Santana stated that prior to going to bed, she rechecked the candle in the kitchen. Ms. Santana stated that everyone else was in the house and in their respective bedrooms. Ms. Santana stated that she went to bed, and the trailer was in a normal condition. Ms. Santana stated that there was no heater in the trailer, and that everyone wore extra clothing to bed, and used extra blankets. Ms. Santana stated that neither her, nor the family had problems with anyone.

INTERVIEWS (continued):

Statements of Ms. Veronica Lopez Santana (continued)-

Ms. Santana stated that when the fire was discovered, she opened her bedroom door and found that the smoke was dark and banked down to about waist level, at which time she closed the door and attempted to break out the bedroom window, to escape with her children. Ms. Santana stated that after she escaped through the window, she was unable to reach the other children. Ms. Santana stated that there was no smoke detector within the trailer.

Statements of Mr. Carlos Estrada-

On December 19, 1999, I, Investigator K. Johnson, interviewed Mr. Carlos Estrada, with a date of birth of July 20, 1975, at the fire scene. Mr. Estrada lived at 16002 South Atlantic Avenue--Space 25C, Compton, California, the structure involved with fire. Mr. Estrada is unsure where he will be residing.

Mr. Estrada stated that he was at the home at the time of the incident. Mr. Estrada stated that his residence was the unit that was involved with fire. Mr. Estrada stated that he was a friend of the family, and that he was in bed, in the south western bedroom, at the time of the fire. Mr. Estrada stated that everyone else was in the house and in their respective bedrooms, and the front door was locked. Mr. Estrada stated that when he went to bed, the trailer was in a normal condition. Mr. Estrada stated that there was no heater in the trailer, and that everyone wore extra clothing to bed, and used extra blankets.

Mr. Estrada stated that when the fire was discovered, he escaped through his bedroom window, and then made attempts to help the others out of the trailer. Mr. Estrada stated that there was no smoke detector within the trailer.

Statements of Sostenes Martin DelCampo, Jr.-

On December 19, 1999, I, Investigator K. Johnson, interviewed Sostenes Martin DelCampo, Jr., with a date of birth of January 04, 1988, at the fire scene. Sostenes Martin DelCampo, Jr., lives at 23342 Valencia Boulevard, Canyon Country, California, 91355, but was visiting his grandmother, Ms. Severiana Santana Velasco (deceased), when the fire occurred.

Sostenes Martin DelCampo, Jr., stated that he was at the home at the time of the incident. Sostenes Martin DelCampo, Jr., stated that he is the son of Ms. Veronica Lopez Santana, and that they were in bed, in the north western bedroom, at the time of the fire. Sostenes Martin DelCampo, Jr., stated that to his knowledge, everyone else was in the house and in their respective bedrooms. Sostenes Martin DelCampo, Jr., stated that when he went to bed, the trailer was in a normal condition.

INTERVIEWS (continued):

Statements of Sostenes Martin DelCampo, Jr. (continued)-

Sostenes Martin DelCampo, Jr., stated that there was no heater in the trailer, and that everyone wore extra clothing to bed, and used extra blankets.

Sostenes Martin DelCampo, Jr., stated that when the fire was discovered, he and his mother, Ms. Santana, crawled out the bedroom window, to escape. Sostenes Martin DelCampo, Jr., stated that the smoke was dark and had banked down to within a couple of feet of the floor.

Statements of Rosalva Lopez-

On December 19, 1999, I, Investigator K. Johnson, with the assistance of CPD Officer Verdugo, interviewed Ms. Rosalva Lopez, with an unknown date of birth, at the fire scene. Ms. Lopez lives at 16002 South Atlantic Avenue--Space 17D, Compton, California. Ms. Lopez was a daughter-in-law to Ms. Severiana Santana Velasco (deceased).

Ms. Lopez stated that to her knowledge, the family had, had no problems with anyone in particular. Ms. Lopez stated that to her knowledge, the structure (mobile home) had not been experiencing any problems with regards to electrical, heating, and/or other associated equipment.

Statements of Maria DeJesus Lopez Santana-

On December 19, 1999, I, Investigator K. Johnson, with the assistance of CPD Officer Verdugo, interviewed Ms. Maria DeJesus Lopez Santana, with a date of birth of June 25, 1973, at the fire scene. Ms. Santana lives at 12717 ½ South Cookacre Avenue, Lynwood, California, with a telephone number of (310) 635-1994. Ms. Santana was a daughter-in-law to Ms. Severiana Santana Velasco (deceased).

Ms. Santana stated that Ms. Severiana Santana Velasco (deceased), had been having problems with a former boyfriend, Mr. Jose DeCastillo Segura, where he physically abused her, and reportedly made a threat to kill her, and he left on bad terms. Ms. Santana stated that Mr. Jose DeCastillo Segura, reportedly stated, "If she calls the police department, she will wake up dead." Ms. Santana stated that to her knowledge, the structure (mobile home) had not been experiencing any problems with regards to electrical, heating, and/or other associated equipment.

INTERVIEWS (continued):

Statements of Jose DeCastillo Segura-

On December 19, 1999, I, Investigator K. Johnson, interviewed Mr. Jose DeCastillo Segura, with a date of birth of June 23, 1961, at the fire scene. Mr. Segura lives at 16002 South Atlantic Avenue--Space 13A, Compton, California, with a telephone number of (310) 622-5522. Mr. Segura was a former boyfriend of Ms. Severiana Santana Velasco (deceased).

Mr. Segura stated that he and Ms. Severiana Santana Velasco (deceased), had been having problems with regards to his drinking, but otherwise, there were no problems, and decided to leave on December 07, 1999. Mr. Segura stated that he was at his sisters house the evening before, during, and the morning after the fire. Mr. Segura stated that to his knowledge, the structure (mobile home) had not been experiencing any problems with regards to electrical, heating, and/or other associated equipment.

Statements of Viviana Segura-

On December 19, 1999, I, Investigator K. Johnson, interviewed Ms. Viviana Segura, with an unknown date of birth, at her home. Ms. Segura lives at 1010 South White Street, Compton, California, with a telephone number of (310) 637-7857. Ms. Segura is the sister of Mr. Jose DeCastillo Segura.

Ms. Seguras statements were consistent with those of Mr. Jose DeCastillo Segura.

DOCUMENT INDEX:

1. City of Compton-Police Departments, Dead Body Report-Case Number 994-6695
2. City of Compton-Police Departments, Dead Body Report-Case Number 994-6709
3. City of Compton-Police Departments, Dead Body Report-Case Number 994-6710
4. County of Los Angeles-Coroner Departments, Autopsy Report-Case Number 99-08721
5. County of Los Angeles-Coroner Departments, Autopsy Report-Case Number 99-08722
6. County of Los Angeles-Coroner Departments, Autopsy Report-Case Number 99-08723
7. City of Compton-Fire Departments, Fire Report-Incident Number 927592-00
8. County of Los Angeles-Sheriffs Departments, Report-Case Number 499-50030-3399-278

CONCLUSION:

After conducting an on-scene fire investigation, I have concluded that the cause of the fire is undetermined, and appears to be accidental, as all deliberate causes had been eliminated.

No further investigation is warranted at this time.

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS:

Upon completion of the fire investigation, an evaluation of the contributing factors to the fire spread took place, and the following findings were discovered:

1. Fire access road obstructions
2. Delay in the notification to the fire department
3. Lack of compliance with NFPA 501A-Regulation of Manufactured and Mobile Homes
4. Uniform Building Code noncompliance (illegal construction, and/or additions)
5. National Electrical Code noncompliance (illegal electrical equipment, and/or appliances)
6. Use of liquid petroleum gas (LPG/propane) for heating, and/or cooking equipment
7. Accumulation of combustible debris, etc., within, around, and/or under the structures
8. Lack of fire protection equipment, systems, and/or devices (such as fire hydrants, etc.)
9. Lack of smoke detectors within the structures

REPORTING INVESTIGATOR:

Kurt Johnson
Fire Investigator

Approved and Noted by

Marvin L. Porter
Fire Marshal

BUSCH, CARR & McADOO • Mobilehome Communities
7700 LAMPSON AVENUE, #150, GARDEN GROVE, CA 92841 • PHONE: 714-894-3381 • FAX: 714-898-5053

Address the Committee:

Senator Dunn

and other legislators

Staff Consultant John Tennyson

I'm Norm McAdoo - my office address is 7700 Lampson Avenue #150 Garden Grove, CA 92841. I've been in the Park business for 43 years - since 1957, and with my partners own and operate 6 mobilehome parks in Orange and Riverside Counties, which we built.

I have worked through WMA, with the Dept of Housing some 30 years on re-writes and revisions to Title 25 of the Mobilehome Parks Act. I have testified many times before this committee when the late Senator Bill Craven was chairman.

I would like to compliment the writer, probably John Tennyson, on the paper distributed for this hearing - it is accurate, complete and well done.

In my first park I had the 1½" hydrants with hose racks every 150' as required and don't recall ever having to use them for fire suppression.

In our parks built during the 60's we placed regular fire hydrants so that any structure could be reached with

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500' of hose. In our parks built in the 70's and 80's we have considerably more hydrants. With the exception of our first park all of our plans were approved by the local fire marshall prior to construction.

We try to flush and operate all of our hydrants at least annually.

Every homesite in every park in Calif is required to have a 3/4" hose bib and generally speaking they do, and they usually have a hose attached. The first few minutes of a fire in a mobilehome are the critical minutes, and in many instances these hoses can control the fire until the fire department arrives.

Perhaps we are placing the focus of this hearing on the wrong premises. We should be studying on how to save lives and property from fires, rather than placing the emphasis on hydrant systems.

According to studies made by the Foremost Insurance Company, the nation's largest insurer of mobilehomes, the prime risk of fire is identified as hazardous conditions in the mobilehome. Studies of mobilehome fires found that the number 1 cause of accidental mobilehome fire is inadequate maintenance of the home's mechanical systems. The systems include:

Furnaces - flues - fireplaces - space heaters - wood stoves - water heaters - kitchen stoves - electrical systems and electrical appliances.

The bad news - if these systems aren't properly

maintained the potential for fire increases -

The good news - fires in these systems are preventable. Locations of fires starting by frequency:

1. Kitchen
2. Living room
3. Bedroom
4. Heating room
5. Underneath the home

Causes by frequency:

1. Heating system
2. Electrical Distribution
3. Cooking
4. Arson
5. Appliances
6. Smoking

A report from the Florida Dept of Agriculture and Consumer Services in May of 1993 says that since fires start within the Mobilehome the focus should be narrowed on inspection and education to hazardous conditions in mobilehomes which are improperly maintained. The evidence suggests that in <u>older</u> mobilehomes a fire will destroy them within 2 to 15 minutes. (This is not true of post code homes.)

The causes and most serious risks accounting for mobilehome fires: "Improper setup, especially with double-wide or expando models, can cause structure shifts and lead to electrical wiring hazards.

1. Yard rubbish-Unsightly as well as a fire hazard. Do not allow paper, rags weeds and other rubbish to accumulate.

2. Children/Fire-keep matches away from children. Teach them fire safety. You are responsible for the fires they start.

3. Debris-Newspapers, oily rags and rubbish can fuel a fire. Remove & dispose.

4. Gasoline Storage-Use a safety can. Keep in a well ventilated place.

5. Burning Barrel-Legal only if trash pickup is not available weekly and local laws do not prohibit it. Barrel should be covered with mesh screen, spark arrester and ground cleared to bare earth for 10ft around the barrel.

6. Hot Ashes-Never dump in exposed pile or into container holding household trash. Soak with water and bury.

7. Fuse Box-Always use proper fuses/breakers. Never "bridge" fuses.

8. House Wiring-Use copper wiring. Aluminum wiring can be very dangerous. If your home has aluminum wiring, have system checked annually by a qualified electrician.

9. Overloaded Circuits-Use only one appliance at a time on a single outlet. Check electrical cords; replace if worn. Never run cords under rugs.

10. Fuel Tanks-too close to building. Remove to a distance where valves can be shut off if house is burning.

11. Outside Water Supply-Too near house for use in case of fire. Have pipe stand away from building, with hose available, or use neighbor's hose.

12. Trash on Roof-leaves, pine needles, etc. are dangerous fire hazards. Keep roof clear of them.

13. Chimney-Cover with mesh screen spark arrester. Top of vent should be at least three feet above roof.

14. Overhanging Branches-don't allow branches to hang over a flue or chimney.

15. Smoke Detectors-Place in appropriate places, including outside each sleeping area. Check monthly.

16. Fireplace-Use fire-resistive materials on walls around stove.

17. Skirting-Should be maintained to prevent burnable debris from blowing under mobilehome, and to prevent materials from being stored there.

18. Fire Extinguishers-Keep an all purpose type fire extinguisher handy near the stove. They are cheap. Have several around.

19. Stove-Use fire-resistive materials on walls around the stove.

20. Curtains-Use fire-resistant materials, especially for curtains near a stove or heater/fireplace.

21. Gas Water Heaters-Play safe, vent all gas heaters. Have yearly checks of hoses/connections. Extend all vent pipes above roof.

22. Towels-Too near gas wall heater.

23. TV Antenna-Poorly installed. Keep guy wires tights. Use lightning arresters.

24. Smoking in Bed-One of the main causes of fires in all types of homes.

25. Vegetation-don't allow forest vegetation to grow nearer than 30 feet of the house.

When firemen arrive they generally realize they cannot save that home and put their effort to saving the other homes around them. This speed of destruction leads to the difference in fire safety construction to a home built before or after the adoptions of fire standards for construction in the early 1970's.

In the sixty's the interiors were all wood and even lacquer was used to finish the surfaces.

In the 70's, the inside painting had to be of flame resistant material as did the carpets and other material.

In the 80's most manufacturers started using dry-wall interiors in order to meet fire safety standards.

In the 60's many homes were built with interior aluminum wiring. Aluminum oxidizes and the diameter shrinks and becomes loose in the lug and starts arcing - this causes tremendous heat and can cause a fire quickly. I've seen the burnt electrical boxes.

In summary, I suggest the following:

1. Give the local fire departments the authority to check the fire hydrants in parks annually and assure that

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they work and have been flushed.

2. Enact a resident education program for a proper inside maintenance program and safety equipment-smoke detectors (with batteries that work), probably 2 good portable fire extinguishers which are serviced regularly - we might be able to arrange for volume discounts for the residents thru a local supplier.

3. Appropriate phase out of pre-code homes on resale in such a way that would not financially harm existing residents - but would not pass on a non-conforming non fire resistant pre-code home to a new uninformed buyer. This would probably require careful legislation that would be supported by all the parties involved.

G5

Notes for Feb 4th Hearing Fire and Safety by Senator Dunn

Facts:

1. The fire hydrants in many manufactured home parks are privately owned.
2. The hydrants and the water main need to be serviced by qualified persons once a year.
3. The water capacity should be checked so the proper gallons per minute are dispensed. The gallons per minute necessary are based on the square footage and construction of the structure.
4. The manufactured home park owner is the responsible party to see that the hydrants are properly maintained in districts where the hydrants are deemed private.
5. The Fire Prevention Water Bureau is not required to make an inspection on privately owned hydrants.
6. The Fire Prevention Water Bureau does however; require proof of maintenance when they consider it necessary. Proof of proper maintenance should be mandated.

Common Problems:

1. Many manufactured home parks do not have sufficient hydrants. When there are multiple homes on fire the water availability is often inadequate.
2. When hydrants are not properly maintained the key to open the hydrant may not work. Then it becomes necessary to connect several hoses and locate another hydrant this takes valuable time.
3. Finding a hydrant is a problem, in some cases bushes are allowed to grow and they cover the hydrant. This poses a greater problem at night. There should not be any growth for a circumference of three feet surrounding the hydrant.
4. Time is very precious when fireman are trying to contain a manufactured home fire. The very construction of most manufactured homes allows the fire to spread rapidly and there is an urgency to contain the fire immediately.

Summary

The safety of manufactured home residents lives are at stake when the ability to fight a fire is hindered by inadequate water supply, insufficient numbers of hydrants, improperly maintained hydrants, and the inability to find a hydrant. The very fact that we are dealing with lives makes a mandate necessary.

Conclusion

CMRAA is in very much in favor of a mandate. The problem is who is going to pay for it? CMRAA is very aware that if the cost falls on the shoulders of the park owners one more time those least able to pay, the manufactured home owners, will

bear the cost. CMRAA does not want the cost to be passed on to the manufactured home owners, we suggest the mandate be backed with money from the State budget or a Federal grant. Manufactured homes are considered low-income housing and the cost of bringing the parks to proper safety codes should not become an additional burden to an already overburdened community.

RCP-12600

C/P HOME

January 19, 2000

Senator Joseph Dunn
1020 N Street, Room 520
Sacramento, CA. 95814

Attn: John Tennyson

RE: MOBILEHOME PARK FIRE SAFETY HEARING

Dear Senator:

In response to your letter on the fire safety hearing, I would like to provide you with verifiable data on Cameron Park Mobile Home Estates in Cameron Park, CA.

This park was built/developed about 1973-1974. A Mr. Thomas was the original developer/builder of the property. In April 1974, Mr.Thomas Yeandle also became involved in the project, and shortly thereafter, became the owner. Mr. Yeandle lives in Castro Valley, and the property (168 spaces) is currently managed by his son, Gene Yeandle. There are 6 fire hydrants in the park.

I am the President of C/P HOME since its origination in May 1998, a resident organization formed to address serious problems in our mobilehome park.

HISTORY

#1.. A letter (#1) dated 2-15-99 written by Gene Yeandle was passed to all residents. (See highlighted areas of enclosures). A part of the letter wanted to know if residents wanted to have individual water meters and asking for a YES or NO
#2... answer. I responded to Mr. Yeandle's letter on 2-17-99 (#2) and on 2-19-98 my husband and myself went to the El Dorado Irrigation District offices (the water district serving our area) to talk to personnel about costs, maintenance, etc. so that I could inform residents on specifics of just how this might impact them. During the course of the meeting, an EID employee,
#3... Cristine Eide, (#3), indicated that "there were no fire hydrants in the park". They were quite surprised when I replied that "Yes, we did have fire hydrants." Shortly thereafter, EID contacted the Cameron Park Fire Department and asked them to inspect the hydrants. The hydrants were inspected on 2-23-99 and found to be completely INOPERABLE! The Cameron Park Fire personnel noted to residents at that time that the previous Fire Marshall had tried "for years" to have the owner comply with the Fire Department requests to bring the hydrants up to code to no avail.

HCD was notified on 2-25-99 and a complaint was to have been filed by Anita
#4... Ravenscroft with the District Attorney. (#4)

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During the following weeks, the park manager, (Gar Hendren) contacted EID personnel to help with the problem and just what work needed to be done. EID was most helpful but because the park water system was a "PRIVATE INSTALLATION" could only "suggest" what needed attention. It was during this time that Mr. Hendren took it upon himself to notify many residents that the fire hydrant
#5.... system was "adequate". See my notes. (#5)

Again, I called the Cameron Park Fire Department and EID to let them know..... and on Sunday, 3-21-99, the Fire Department again tested the hydrants with the same results....NO WATER!! The manager was notified immediately.

On Thursday, 3-25-99, Dennis Markey, * Ray Urwiller, and myself, along with Gar Hendren met in his office. Also attending was Conforti Plumbing (Steve) who had been called in, having been referred by EID. Steve (Conforti Plumbing) reported on the problems to those at the meeting:

1. The Pressure Regulator Valve was not working and needed replaced...Approximate cost $2,000.00. It would take some time to get a new one.
2. The 6" line which comes from the big meter ON the park side is reduced to a 4" water line, before it goes down into the ground."Because this water line has been reduced, the pressure is reduced," Steve stated. This will also hinder the water flow to the hydrants, Steve stated.
3. Steve also mentioned that a 6" water line would "blow a mobilehome sky high" if a 6" water line happened to rupture. In our park, all the water and sewer lines lie BENEATH the mobilehomes. There is only one 4" line serving both the domestic lines as well as the fire hydrants in the park.

* Mr. Urwiller (who had done park maintenance for years here) noted for C/P HOME members long before this incident that the water lines were 4" lines. We have taped board and general meeting notes in which he notes this fact. (#6)

#6 (On tape- not included.)

After the new Regulator Valve was installed, it brought the Fire Flow Pressure up to 850 GPM on the south side of the park and 650 GPM on the north side of the
#7... park. See letter from the Fire Department dated 7-5-99. (#7) The Fire Department and EID personnel have met a number of times to discuss the problem with the LACK OF PRESSURE in the lines, etc. and the owner's inability to correct the problem. The Fire Department asked the park owner to relocate two hydrants that were located on lot properties and hidden....one was half-buried in the ground. (See pictures). One hydrant has been moved to the street, the other, while it has been raised up, is still located immediately next to the mobilehome and that one still needs to be moved to the street. (As of this date, it has not been moved.) After almost one year, this work has not yet been done. I had asked the Fire Department to "cite" Mr. Yeandle...but they seem to be very reluctant to do this... they feel "He is trying".

It seems that the mobilehome park plans (approved by El Dorado County) at the time the park was built call for 6" water lines. This is not what Conforti Plumbing told the group who met on March 25, 1999....and it does agree with Mr. Urwiller's statements. I do not question that a Fire Department inspection of the hydrants show a 6" water line to those hydrants. However, when a 4" line feeds a 6" line, that pressure is reduced....causing a drop of pressure and that is why the pressure cannot be increased. (I do not believe that there are valves, or gates,

or (?) restricting the water flow.

What were the applicable fire codes when Cameron Park Mobilehome Estates were built? The Fire Department has not provided us with that information. And, most importantly, how can we provide enforcement of the codes and laws?

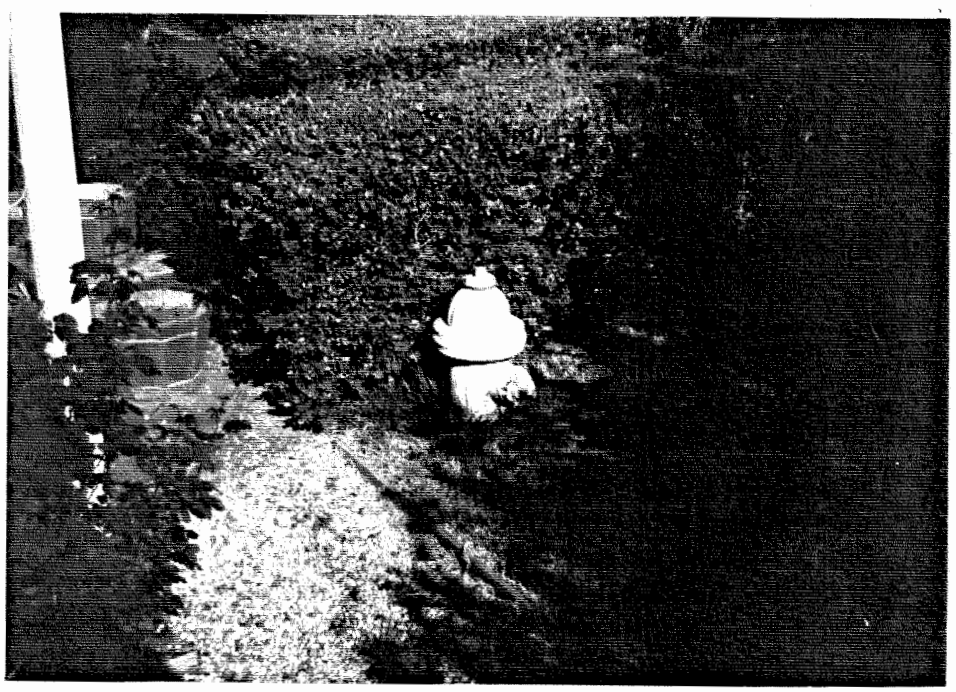
I hope that your hearings will prove beneficial to enable mobilehome residents a sense of security.....that when you see fire hydrants nearby.... they are operable!! The Garden Grove tragedy is an example of mobilehome park owners willful negligence.

Sincerely,

Joan Hall

Mrs. Joan Hall
2681 Cameron Park Drive, #27
Cameron Park, CA. 95682

Enc.



California State Fire Marshal
California Fire Incident Reporting System (CFIRS Program)

MOBILEHOME FIRES

1974 - 1994

Codes selected: Type of Incident 18 (Mobilehome) & Property Classification 471 (Mobilehome) "Dollar loss as estimated by fire department." (NOTE: Not all Fire incident reports contain a dollar loss.

Year	# of Fires Reported	# of Mobile Home Fires Reported	% of Total Fires	Estimated Property Dollar Loss	Estimated Content Dollar Loss	Fire Fighters Injured	Fire Fighter Deaths	Civilians Injured	Civilian Deaths
1974	216,528	800	.4%	1,578,962	779,681	17	0	32	16
1975	216,175	854	.4%	1,663,292	875,256	28	0	33	11
1976	214,088	920	.4%	1,845,316	784,706	24	0	36	24
1977	194,620	843	.4%	1,603,557	714,776	34	0	40	22
1978	201,335	778	.4%	3,063,647	1,356,443	24	0	25	19
1979	223,818	806	.4%	3,398,928	1,295,175	18	0	38	9
1980	211,934	755	.4%	3,460,186	1,461,895	16	0	31	11
1981	192,460	793	.4%	4,049,911	1,639,797	22	0	34	20
1982	165,471	750	.5%	4,515,149	1,936,621	11	0	31	18
1983	155,892	789	.5%	5,247,029	2,300,070	18	0	37	20
1984	174,612	837	.5%	5,528,161	2,530,557	12	0	30	15
1985	171,131	785	.5%	6,055,549	2,538,101	21	0	45	11
1986	159,700	751	.5%	5,609,219	2,839,263	26	0	32	14
1987	162,203	768	.5%	5,155,484	2,300,910	25	0	38	17
1988	168,492	815	.5%	6,073,572	2,575,829	17	0	42	14
1989	158,470	654	.4%	4,891,051	2,349,056	12	0	51	6
1990	154,970	729	.5%	6,896,502	1,958,033	14	0	28	19
1991	147,539	699	.5%	5,941,088	1,930,644	18	0	36	13
1992	145,766	536	.4%	4,853,778	1,754,973	6	0	35	16
1993	120,906	464	.4%	13,302,764	4,061,471	10	0	22	9
1994*	92,643	Not available							

*Year incomplete. Totals may differ from earlier reports due to update the master file.

WARNING: Due to the transition to the updated CFIRS format, the number of fire departments represented in the 1991-1994 data is nconsistent; therefore, year-to-year comparisons for this period will not be as valid as comparisons for the previous years.

Under WP6.1 (MobHome.wpd) Revised 9/27/96

California State Fire Marshal
California Fire Incident Reporting System (CFIRS Program)

Mobile Home Fires and Source of Heat

Codes selected: Type of Incident 11 (Structure) and 18 (Mobile Home) & Property Classification 471 (Mobile Home)
"Dollar loss as estimated by fire department." (NOTE: Not all fire incident reports contain a dollar loss.)

Year	# of Mobile Homes Fires Reported	*Code 00* Source Unknown	*Codes 10-19* Heating Systems	*Codes 20-29* Cooking Equipment	*Codes 30-39* Air Conditioning	*Codes 40-49* Electrical	*Codes 50-59* Appliances	*Codes 60-69* Special Equipment	*Codes 70-79* Processing Equip-ment	*Codes 80-89* Service Equipment	*Codes 90-99* Other Object or Exposure
1974	800	118	90	142	23	159	43	10	2	7	204
1975	854	134	110	140	15	154	59	3	1	7	231
1976	920	135	116	178	29	172	60	1	1	3	225
1977	843	94	98	197	26	161	38	6	2	5	216
1978	778	73	106	165	29	150	50	1	2	0	202
1979	806	70	115	153	21	137	52	1	0	2	255
1980	755	59	93	145	33	145	37	4	2	1	236
1981	793	66	110	121	38	146	48	7	0	4	253
1982	750	63	117	143	24	130	31	4	0	3	235
1983	789	36	112	144	28	172	42	2	1	3	249
1984	837	45	130	161	38	174	51	6	0	4	228
1985	785	48	116	136	31	132	48	2	0	3	269
1986	751	53	92	150	34	152	38	7	0	3	222
1987	768	61	111	135	26	135	40	4	1	3	252
1988	815	50	112	135	35	155	43	2	1	4	278
1989	654	49	98	128	25	126	33	4	0	4	187
1990	729	79	101	120	33	124	33	3	1	8	227
1991	699	92	102	111	33	103	39	7	1	8	203
1992	536	92	65	80	20	86	20	3	1	4	165
1993	464	92	58	73	16	70	20	2	1	2	130
1994 *	Not available										

*Year incomplete. Totals may differ from earlier reports due to update of the master file.

WARNING: Due to the transition to the updated CFIRS format, the number of fire departments represented in the 1991-1994 data is inconsistent; therefore, year-to-year comparisons for this period will not be as valid as comparisons for the previous years.

Under WP6.1 (MobHome.wpd) Revised 9.27/96

County Of Los Angeles
Fire Department
Fire Prevention Division

Mobile Home Fire Safety Tips

1. Dial 911 in case of fire.
2. Test all existing smoke detectors. Replace as necessary.
3. If not provided by the manufacturer, install a minimum of one U.L. Listed smoke detector in each mobile home unit and replace batteries every six months.
4. Provide a smoke detector to protect each bedroom area. Install per manufacturer's instructions.
5. Clear brush/grass and debris from around and beneath the mobile home.
6. Ensure that space numbers are clearly marked.
7. Plan an escape route.
8. Own and learn to properly operate a fire extinguisher (Multi-purpose ABC extinguishers are recommended).
9. Ensure L.P.G. tanks are securely fastened to hitch brackets.
10. Inspect L.P.G. flexible gas connectors for wear, aging or damage; replace with approved connector hose as necessary.
11. Ensure that no L.P.G. container or vessel shall be stored or located inside of or beneath any storage cabinet, cabana, awning, carport, mobile home, or any other structure.
12. Ensure that designated fire lanes are clear at all times.
13. Ensure that bars, grilles, grates or similar devices installed on bedroom windows are openable from the inside using an approved release mechanism.
14. Ensure that mobile homes are skirted to the ground using one-hour fire resistive or non-combustible construction when located in hazardous wildland fire areas.
15. Ensure that attached accessory structures such as carports, decks, patio covers, stairs and trellises be of one hour fire resistive, heavy timber or noncombustible construction when located in a hazardous wildland fire area.

REQUEST FOR HCD PARK SURVEY

February 29, 2000

Julie Bornstein, Director
Department of Housing and Community Development
1800 3rd Street, Suite 410, P.O. Box 952053
Sacramento, CA 94252-2053

Dear Ms. Bornstein:

Earlier this month, the Senate Select Committee on Mobile and Manufactured Homes sponsored a hearing, along with the chairs of the Senate and Assembly Housing Committees, to gather information from representatives of mobilehome owners, park owners, local fire agencies, the State Fire Marshal, and HCD concerning fire hydrant safety in California's mobilehome parks. The hearing came about as the result of a tragic fire in the 65-year old El Rancho Park in Compton, on December 19, 1999, in which a grandmother and her 2 grandchildren died.

The Mobilehome Parks Act requires mobilehome parks built after September 1, 1968 to install fire hydrants in accordance with 1977 National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards. But the committee has determined that there is no information immediately available concerning the age of mobilehome parks over which HCD has jurisdiction, or how many parks were built before 1968. Therefore, we cannot fully determine the extent of this problem statewide, that is, how many parks have adequate fire hydrants and how many do not. Conversations between our staffs and HCD representatives indicate that HCD has computerized records of the permits to operate for these parks, which would give us the age of most of these parks, but there is no information from state records indicating which parks have hydrants or a history of fires in those parks. As such, we have two requests:

1) Based on records of permits to operate that are available, we first request the Department to inventory mobilehome parks to determine their ages. The inventory should include a list of the names and ages of the parks by city and by county (unincorporated areas), including which parks fall under local enforcement jurisdiction and which are under HCD. We request information from the inventory to be provided to our respective committees by April 3, 2000.

2) We also request the department to survey local governments and local fire agencies to determine how many mobilehome parks in their jurisdictions, by name in each city or county, have fire hydrants within the parks, the ages of the homes in those parks, and which parks have, since September 1, 1968, had fires in the park that have damaged or destroyed mobilehomes, the ages of the homes damaged or destroyed, and the fires which have resulted in injuries or fatalities. This information will help us to determine if there is any correlation between the availability of in-park fire hydrants and the serious nature (spread) of those fires as well as any correlation between the ages of the homes and the incidence of fires. We request information from this survey to be provided to our respective committees by September 1, 2000.

Your cooperation in furnishing this information to our respective committees by the requested dates will be appreciated. If you have any questions concerning this request, please contact us or staff of the Senate Committee on Housing and Community Development at 445-8740 or the Senate Select Committee on Mobile and Manufactured Homes at 324-4282.

Sincerely yours,

JOSEPH L. DUNN
Chairman
Senate Select Committee on Mobile
and Manufactured Homes

RICHARD ALARCON
Chairman
Senate Housing and Community
Development Committee

Mobilehome Parks Built
Pre- & Post- 9/1/68
Preliminary HCD Statistics
(incomplete)

COUNTY_NAME	County Total	HCD before Sept 1, 1968	HCD after Sept 1, 1968	HCD Not Known	Local before Sept 1, 1968	Local after Sept 1, 1968	Local Not Known
ALAMEDA	61	11	12	14	0	0	24
ALPINE	3	1	0	2	0	0	0
AMADOR	25	6	9	8	0	1	1
BUTTE	101	30	26	45	0	0	0
CALAVERAS	19	6	4	9	0	0	0
COLUSA	19	6	3	10	0	0	0
CONTRA COSTA	69	10	7	13	0	0	39
DEL NORTE	55	0	0	0	0	2	53
EL DORADO	61	21	12	28	0	0	0
FRESNO	91	28	21	42	0	0	0
GLENN	18	2	6	10	0	0	0
HUMBOLDT	91	24	23	44	0	0	0
IMPERIAL	66	0	0	0	0	0	66
INYO	53	12	13	28	0	0	0
KERN	206	49	43	114	0	0	0
KINGS	16	6	5	5	0	0	0
LAKE	114	19	18	57	5	4	11
LASSEN	24	5	9	10	0	0	0
LOS ANGELES	643	107	4	461	1	0	70
MADERA	19	4	10	5	0	0	0
MARIN	12	3	4	5	0	0	0
MARIPOSA	14	3	5	6	0	0	0
MENDOCINO	77	19	11	47	0	0	0
MERCED	35	7	11	17	0	0	0
MODOC	8	0	0	0	0	0	8
MONO	27	11	4	12	0	0	0
MONTEREY	79	9	5	20	0	0	45
NAPA	42	8	3	6	1	0	24
NEVADA	28	9	9	10	0	0	0
ORANGE	211	58	40	61	0	0	52
PLACER	44	16	7	20	0	0	1
PLUMAS	65	13	16	36	0	0	0
RIVERSIDE	303	16	20	36	1	1	229
SACRAMENTO	115	23	32	54	0	0	6
SAN BENITO	7	3	3	1	0	0	0
SAN BERNARDINO	376	9	11	16	1	0	339
SAN DIEGO	422	13	7	16	0	1	385
SAN JOAQUIN	115	37	16	62	0	0	0
SAN LUIS OBISPO	93	27	26	40	0	0	0
SAN MATEO	21	4	1	7	0	0	9
SANTA BARBARA	65	9	5	9	0	0	42
SANTA CLARA	111	32	37	42	0	0	0

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COUNTY_NAME	County Total	HCD before Sept 1, 1968	HCD after Sept 1, 1968	HCD Not Known	Local before Sept 1, 1968	Local after Sept 1, 1968	Local Not Known
SANTA CRUZ	79	26	15	38	0	0	0
SHASTA	111	23	26	62	0	0	0
SIERRA	10	1	2	7	0	0	0
SISKIYOU	50	15	8	27	0	0	0
SOLANO	44	12	4	28	0	0	0
SONOMA	101	29	21	50	0	0	1
STANISLAUS	119	5	12	14	1	0	87
SUTTER	26	5	8	13	0	0	0
TEHAMA	40	6	7	27	0	0	0
TRINITY	42	7	8	27	0	0	0
TULARE	82	17	16	46	0	0	3
TUOLUMNE	41	0	0	0	0	1	40
VENTURA	98	26	18	33	0	0	21
YOLO	38	11	6	21	0	0	0
YUBA	44	6	9	29	0	0	0
sum	4,949	865	658	1,850	10	10	1,556

57 rows selected.

AMENDED IN SENATE APRIL 6, 2000

AMENDED IN SENATE MARCH 27, 2000

SENATE BILL No. 1627

Introduced by Senator Dunn

(Principal ~~coauthor: Assembly Member~~ *coauthors: Assembly Members Havice and* Lowenthal)

~~**(Coauthors: Senators Karnette and McPherson)**~~

~~(Coauthors: Assembly Members Corbett and Mazzoni)~~

(Coauthors: Senators Alarcon, Chesbro, Karnette, McPherson, Sher, and Solis)

(Coauthors: Assembly Members Corbett, Keeley, Machado, Mazzoni, and Washington)

February 22, 2000

An act to amend Section 18691 of~~, and to add Section 18692 to,~~ the Health and Safety Code, relating to mobilehome parks, and declaring the urgency thereof, to take effect immediately.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 1627, as amended, Dunn. Mobilehome parks: fire protection.

Existing law requires the Department of Housing and Community Development to adopt rules and regulations that are reasonably consistent with generally recognized fire protection standards, governing conditions relating to the prevention of fire or for the protection of life and property against fire in mobilehome parks and special occupancy parks. The regulations apply to all parks, except those parks within

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a city, county, or city and county that has adopted and is enforcing a fire prevention code imposing restrictions equal to or greater than state building standards. This exception applies only if the city, county, or city and county is the enforcement agency for state building standards.

The bill would provide instead that this exception to the application of these regulations applies only if the city, county, or city and county gives the department a 30-day notice of its intention to assume jurisdiction for enforcement of the fire prevention code in parks. It would also exempt from the regulations parks within a special district that meets the requirements of the bill.

This bill would require the department to adopt and implement no later than January 1, 2001, regulations requiring regular maintenance and the annual inspection and testing of fire hydrants in mobilehome parks ~~under the jurisdiction of the department~~.

This bill would declare that it is to take effect immediately as an urgency statute.

Vote: $^2/_3$. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes. State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 18691 of the Health and Safety Code is amended to read:

18691. *(a)* The department shall adopt rules and regulations that it determines are reasonably consistent with generally recognized fire protection standards, governing conditions relating to the prevention of fire or for the protection of life and property against fire in parks. The department shall adopt and submit building standards for approval pursuant to Chapter 4 (commencing with Section 18935) of Part 2.5 for the purposes described in this section within permanent buildings. *The department shall adopt and implement no later than January 1, 2001, regulations that require regular maintenance and annual inspection and testing of fire hydrants in mobilehome parks.*

~~The~~

(b) The regulations adopted by the department shall be applicable in all parks, except in a park within a city, county, city and county, or special district, that has adopted and is enforcing a fire prevention code imposing restrictions equal to or greater than the restrictions imposed by those building standards published in the State Building Standards Code and the other state regulations adopted by the department and which city, county, city and county, or special district gives the department a 30-day written notice of its intention to assume jurisdiction for enforcement of the fire prevention code in parks.

~~Notwithstanding~~

(c) Notwithstanding the provisions of this section, the rules and regulations adopted by the department relating to the installation of water supply and fire hydrant systems shall not apply within parks constructed, or approved for construction, prior to January 1, 1966.

~~SEC. 2. Section 18692 is added to the Health and Safety Code, to read:~~

~~18692. The department shall adopt and implement no later than January 1, 2001, regulations requiring regular maintenance and the annual inspection and testing of fire hydrants in mobilehome parks under the jurisdiction of the department.~~

~~SEC. 3.~~

SEC. 2. This act is an urgency statute necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety within the meaning of Article IV of the Constitution and shall go into immediate effect. The facts constituting the necessity are:

To ensure that the Department of Housing and Community Development will be able to adopt and implement regulations for the testing and inspection of fire hydrants in mobilehome parks to protect the health and safety of mobilehome park residents as quickly as possible, it is necessary that this act take effect immediately.

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SENATE HOUSING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
Senator Richard Alarcón, Chairman

Bill No: SB 1627
Author: Dunn
Version: March 27, 2000
Urgency

Hearing: April 3, 2000
Fiscal: Yes
Consultant: Mark Stivers

MOBILEHOME PARKS: FIRE PROTECTION

Background and Existing Law:

The Mobilehome Parks Act (Act) authorizes the Department of Housing (HCD) to regulate the construction, installation, use, maintenance, and occupancy of mobilehomes and mobilehome parks. Among other things, the Act requires HCD to adopt rules and regulations relating to the prevention of fire or the protection of life and property from fire in parks, but precludes the department from requiring fire hydrant systems in parks built before January 1, 1966.

The regulations adopted by the department pursuant to the Act require the installation and maintenance of fire hydrant systems in every park of 15 or more lots constructed after September 1, 1968. However, the regulations do not require inspection or testing of these hydrants.

Except where a local jurisdiction has assumed responsibility from HCD for enforcement of the entire Act, a local government is preempted from enforcing the HCD fire safety regulations or from adopting any stricter fire prevention code of its own. Currently, 87 local governments are local enforcement agencies. HCD enforces all Mobilehome Parks Act regulations in the remaining jurisdictions.

Proposed Law:

SB 1627 requires HCD, by January 1, 2001, to adopt and implement regulations requiring the regular maintenance and annual inspection of fire hydrants in mobilehome parks.

SB 1627 also provides that the general fire prevention regulations adopted by HCD shall not apply in parks where a city, county, city and county, or special district has adopted, and is enforcing, an equal or more restrictive fire prevention code and has notified HCD that it is assuming jurisdiction for fire code prevention. By removing the requirement that the jurisdiction also be the local enforcement agency for the entire Act, this provision allows local governments to adopt and enforce fire prevention codes without taking on the other responsibilities of the Act.

Comments:

1. The Compton Fire. In December 1999, a fire in a home at the El Rancho Mobilehome Park in Compton resulted in the deaths of three persons, including two children. No hydrants were required at the park because it had been built to the standards in force at the time of construction in 1935 and HCD is prohibited from requiring a park owner to retroactively install hydrants. Prior to the fire, the City of Compton had adopted an ordinance requiring the installation of hydrants at the park, but HCD informed the City that its ordinance was preempted by the Mobilehome Parks Act due to the fact that the City was not a local enforcement agency. At a subsequent hearing held by the Senate Select Committee on Mobilehomes, it was also discovered that HCD does not inspect or require the inspection of hydrants where they are required to ensure they are operable. The author believes the provisions of this bill will result in better fire protection for the residents of mobilehome parks.

2. Unintended ambiguity. The bill is constructed in such a way that HCD would have general authority to regulate fire safety in parks while local governments would be able to adopt and enforce stricter standards. The language requiring HCD to develop fire hydrant testing and maintenance standards, however, is in a separate section that does not expressly allow for local governments to have stricter standards. This construction may result in ambiguity as to whether or not local governments may adopt and enforce stricter fire hydrant standards than those promulgated by the department. **The committee may wish to consider an amendment to place the fire hydrant regulation language in the existing section relating to fire safety to resolve any ambiguity.**

3. Additional retrofits required? While HCD is prohibited from requiring a park owner to retroactively install hydrant systems in mobilehome parks built prior to 1968, a local government may adopt such requirements if it is a local enforcement agency. By allowing a local government to adopt and enforce a stricter fire prevention code without being a local enforcement agency, more jurisdictions may avail themselves of this authority and require parkowners to retrofit their parks. **The committee may wish to consider whether or not the costs of retrofitting a park may result in rent increases to tenants or additional costs for owners.**

4. Urgency statute. SB 1627 is an urgency statute that would take effect immediately upon enactment.

Related Legislation

AB 2015 (Dickerson) would apply the Mobilehome Parks Act to the owners and users of camping cabins.

AB 2605 (Cardenas) removes HCD from the role of enforcing the Mobilehomes Parks Act and requires local governments to enforce the Act. In addition, the bill requires park owners to retrofit parks built prior to 1968 with fire hydrants by January 1, 2005 and prohibits an owner from passing on more than 10% of the cost to residents.

SB 2131 (O'Connell) would remove special occupancy parks from the Mobilehome Parks Act and regulate them instead under a Special Occupancy Parks Act with identical provisions.

Support and Opposition: (3/27/00)

Support: California Fire Chiefs Association
California Professional Firefighters
Fire Districts Association of California
Golden State Mobilhome Owners League

Opposition: unknown

ASSEMBLY BILL No. 2605

Introduced by Assembly Member Cardenas

February 25, 2000

An act to amend Sections 18300, 18306, 18400, 18400.1, 18670, and 18691 of the Health and Safety Code, relating to mobilehome parks.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2605, as introduced, Cardenas. Mobilehome parks: standards enforcement.

(1) The Mobilehome Parks Act requires the Department of Housing and Community Development to enforce the act and the rules and regulations adopted pursuant to it, unless a city, county, or city and county assumes this responsibility.

This bill instead would require a city, county, or city and county to assume responsibility for enforcing the act and the rules and regulations adopted pursuant to it as applied within its jurisdiction. By imposing additional duties upon local officials, this bill would impose a state-mandated local program.

(2) The act requires the department to adopt rules and regulations that it determines are reasonably consistent with generally recognized fire protection standards governing conditions relating to the prevention of fire or for the protection of life and property against fire in parks, except that the rules and regulations relating to installation of water supply and fire hydrants systems do not apply to parks

(114)

constructed, or approved for construction, prior to January 1, 1966.

This bill would require a park constructed, or approved for construction, prior to January 1, 1966, to meet, on or before January 1, 2005, a particular Fire Protection Association Standard or the rules or regulations adopted by the local enforcement agency regarding fire protection if those are more stringent. It would prohibit the owner or management of the park from requiring residents from paying more than 10% of the costs to upgrade.

(3) The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement, including the creation of a State Mandates Claims Fund to pay the costs of mandates that do not exceed $1,000,000 statewide and other procedures for claims whose statewide costs exceed $1,000,000.

This bill would provide that, if the Commission on State Mandates determines that the bill contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement for those costs shall be made pursuant to these statutory provisions.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes. State-mandated local program: yes.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 18300 of the Health and Safety Code is amended to read:

18300. (a) This part applies to all parts of the state and supersedes any ordinance enacted by any city, county, or city and county, whether general law or chartered, applicable to this part. Except as provided in Section 18930, the department may adopt regulations to interpret and make specific this part and, when adopted, the regulations shall apply to all parts of the state.

(b) ~~Upon 30 days' written notice from the governing body to the department, any city, county, or city and county may assume the responsibility for the enforcement of this part and the regulations adopted~~

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~~pursuant to this part following approval by the department for the assumption.~~

~~(c) The department shall adopt regulations which set forth the conditions for assumption and may include required qualifications of local enforcement agencies. The conditions set forth and the qualifications required in the regulations which set forth the conditions for assumption shall relate solely to the ability of local agencies to enforce properly this part and the regulations adopted pursuant to this part. The regulations which set forth the conditions for assumption shall not set requirements for local agencies different than those which the state maintains for its own enforcement program. When assumption is approved, the department shall transfer the responsibility for enforcement to the city, county, or city and county, together with all records of parks within the jurisdiction of the city, county, or city and county.~~

~~(d) (1) In the event of nonenforcement of this part or the regulations adopted pursuant to this part by a city, county, or city and county, the department shall enforce this part and the regulations adopted pursuant to this part in the city, county, or city and county, after the department has given written notice to the governing body of the city, county, or city and county, setting forth in what respects the city, county, or city and county has failed to discharge its responsibility, and the city, county, or city and county has failed to initiate corrective measures to carry out its responsibility within 30 days of the notice.~~

~~(2) Where the department determines that the local enforcement agency is not properly enforcing this part, the local enforcement agency shall have the right to appeal the decision to the director of the department.~~

~~(e) Any city, city and county, or county, upon written notice from the governing body to the department, may cancel its assumption of responsibility for the enforcement of this part. The department, upon receipt of the notice, shall assume responsibility within 30 days.~~

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~~(f)~~ Every city, county, or city and county, within its jurisdiction, shall enforce this part and the regulations adopted pursuant to this part, as they relate to manufactured homes, mobilehomes, or recreational vehicles and to accessory buildings or structures located ~~in~~ both ~~of~~ the ~~following areas:~~

~~(1) Inside of parks while the city, county, or city and county has assumed responsibility for enforcement of this part.~~

~~(2) Outside of parks.~~

~~(g)~~ *inside and outside of parks.*

(c) This part shall not prevent local authorities of any city, county, or city and county, within the reasonable exercise of their police powers, from doing any of the following:

(1) From establishing, subject to the requirements of Sections 65852.3 and 65852.7 of the Government Code, certain zones for manufactured homes, mobilehomes, mobilehome parks, and special occupancy parks within the city, county, or city and county, or establishing types of uses and locations, including family mobilehome parks, senior mobilehome parks, mobilehome condominiums, mobilehome subdivisions, or mobilehome planned unit developments within the city, county, or city and county, as defined in the zoning ordinance, or from adopting rules and regulations by ordinance or resolution prescribing park perimeter walls or enclosures on public street frontage, signs, access, and vehicle parking or from prescribing the prohibition of certain uses for mobilehome parks or special occupancy parks.

(2) From regulating the construction and use of equipment and facilities located outside of a manufactured home, mobilehome, or recreational vehicle used to supply gas, water, or electricity thereto, except facilities owned, operated, and maintained by a public utility, or to dispose of sewage or other waste therefrom when the facilities are located outside a park for which a permit is required by this part or the regulations adopted pursuant thereto.

(3) From requiring a permit to use a manufactured home, mobilehome, or recreational vehicle outside a park for which a permit is required by this part or by regulations adopted pursuant thereto, and require a fee therefor by local ordinance commensurate with the cost of enforcing this part and local ordinance with reference to the use of manufactured homes, mobilehomes, and recreational vehicles, which permit may be refused or revoked if the use violates this part or Part 2 (commencing with Section 18000), any regulations adopted pursuant thereto, or any local ordinance applicable to that use.

(4) From requiring a local building permit to construct an accessory structure for a manufactured home or mobilehome when the manufactured home or mobilehome is located outside a mobilehome park, recreational vehicle park, or temporary recreational vehicle park, under circumstances which the provisions of this part or Part 2 (commencing with Section 18000) and the regulations adopted pursuant thereto do not require the issuance of a permit therefor by the department.

(5) From authorizing the creation, movement, shifting, or alteration of mobilehome park lot lines as specified in Section 18610.5.

(6) From prescribing and enforcing set-back and separation requirements governing the installation of a manufactured home, mobilehome, or mobilehome accessory structure or building installed outside of a mobilehome park or special occupancy park.

~~(h)~~

(d) (1) A city, including a charter city, county, or city and county, shall not require the average density in a new park to be less than that permitted by the applicable zoning ordinance, plus any density bonus, as defined in Section 65915 of the Government Code, for other affordable housing forms.

(2) A city, including a charter city, county, or city and county, shall not require a new park to include a clubhouse. Recreational facilities, recreational areas,

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accessory structures, or improvements may be required only to the extent that the facilities or improvements are required in other types of residential developments containing a like number of residential dwelling units.

(3) A city, including a charter city, county, or city and county, shall not require the set-back and separation requirements authorized by paragraph (6) of subdivision (g) to be greater than those permitted by applicable ordinances for other housing forms.

~~(i)~~

(e) The department may, at the department's sole option, enforce plan review activities associated with this part and the rules and regulations adopted thereunder through department-approved plan checking agencies. The department shall adopt regulations for approving and monitoring plan checking agencies, including, but not limited to, all of the following criteria:

(1) Freedom of any conflict of interest.

(2) Qualifications of personnel.

(3) A prohibition against collusive or fraudulent actions related to the performance of activities required by this part.

(4) Establishment of a schedule of fees to offset the department's cost of administering the approval and monitoring activities.

(5) Establishment of procedures for reimbursement to plan checking agencies for plan review services rendered.

(6) Establishment of a schedule of citations and administrative fines issued by the department upon finding a violation of this subdivision on the part of a plan checking agency.

(7) Any other conditions of operation the department may reasonably require.

~~(j)~~

(f) (1) The department may, by regulation, provide for the qualification of plan checking agencies to perform reviews of plans and specifications for the construction of mobilehome parks and to perform reviews of plans and specifications for the construction of additional buildings

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or lots, the alteration of buildings, lots, or other installations, in an existing mobilehome park~~, in areas in which the department is the enforcement agency~~. The regulations shall specify that all approved plan checking agencies shall employ at least one architect or engineer, licensed by the State of California, and that the architect or engineer shall be responsible for all plan review activity specified in this part. Plans approved by department-approved agencies shall be deemed the equivalent of department approval of those plans.

(2) No agency approved to serve as a plan checking agency pursuant to this subdivision shall have a financial interest in any mobilehome park, with any owner, developer, or contractor of a mobilehome park, or in any entity used by the department for the purpose of performing oversight of the performance of plan checking agencies.

SEC. 2. Section 18306 of the Health and Safety Code is amended to read:

18306. (a) The department shall evaluate the enforcement of this part and regulations adopted pursuant to this part by each city, county, or city and county~~ which has assumed responsibility for enforcement~~.

(b) In performing this evaluation, the department shall have the following authority:

(1) To examine the records of local enforcement agencies and to secure from them reports and copies of their records at any time. However, if the department requires duplication of these records, it shall pay for the costs of duplication.

(2) To carry out any investigations it deems necessary to ensure enforcement of this part and the regulations adopted pursuant thereto.

SEC. 3. Section 18400 of the Health and Safety Code is amended to read:

18400. (a) The ~~department~~ *city, county, or city and county in which a park is located* shall enforce this part and the rules and regulations adopted pursuant to this part~~, except as provided in Section 18300~~.

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(b) The officers or agents of the enforcement agency may do either of the following:

(1) Enter public or private property to determine whether there exists any park to which this part applies.

(2) Enter and inspect all parks, wherever situated, and inspect all accommodations, equipment, or paraphernalia used in connection therewith, including the right to examine any registers of occupants maintained therein in order to secure the enforcement of this part and the regulations adopted pursuant to this part.

SEC. 4. Section 18400.1 of the Health and Safety Code is amended to read:

18400.1. (a) In accordance with subdivision (b), the enforcement agency shall enter and inspect mobilehome parks, as required under this part, at least once every seven years, to ensure enforcement of this part and the regulations adopted pursuant to this part. The enforcement agency's inspection shall include an inspection of the exterior portions of individual manufactured homes and mobilehomes in each park inspected. Any notices of violation of this part shall be issued pursuant to Chapter 3.5 (commencing with Section 18420).

(b) In developing its mobilehome park maintenance inspection program, the enforcement agency shall inspect the mobilehome parks that the enforcement agency determines either:

(1) Had the most serious, or a substantial number of serious, health and safety violations as a result of inspections of the parks made pursuant to the mobilehome park maintenance inspection program during the 1991 through 1999 phase of the program.

(2) Have complaints that have been made to the enforcement agency regarding serious health and safety violations in the park. A single complaint of a serious health and safety violation shall not automatically trigger an inspection of the entire park unless upon investigation of that single complaint the enforcement agency

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determines that there is a violation and that an inspection of the entire park is necessary.

(c) Nothing in this part shall be construed to allow the enforcement agency to issue a notice for a violation of existing laws or regulations that were not violations of the laws or regulations at the time the mobilehome park received its original permit to operate, or the standards governing any subsequent permit to construct, or at the time the manufactured home or mobilehome received its original installation permit, unless the enforcement agency determines that a condition of the park, manufactured home, or mobilehome endangers the life, limb, health, or safety of the public or occupants thereof.

(d) Not less than 30 days prior to the inspection of a mobilehome park under this section, the enforcement agency shall provide individual written notice of the inspection to the registered owners of the manufactured homes or mobilehomes, with a copy of the notice to the occupants thereof, if different than the registered owners, and to the owner or operator of the mobilehome park and the responsible person, as defined in Section 18603.

(e) At the sole discretion of the enforcement agency's inspector, a representative of either the park operator or the mobilehome owners may accompany the inspector during the inspection if that request is made to the enforcement agency or the inspector requests a representative to accompany him or her. If either party requests permission to accompany the inspector or is requested by the inspector to accompany him or her, the other party shall also be given the opportunity, with reasonable notice, to accompany the inspector. Only one representative of the park owner and one representative of the mobilehome owners in the park may accompany the inspector at any one time during the inspection. If more than one representative of the mobilehome owners in the park requests permission to accompany the inspector, the enforcement agency may adopt procedures for choosing that representative.

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(f) The enforcement agency shall coordinate a preinspection orientation for mobilehome owners and mobilehome park operators with the use of an audio-visual presentation furnished by the department to affected local enforcement agencies. Enforcement agencies shall furnish the audio-visual presentation to park operators and mobilehome owner representatives in each park subject to inspection not less than 30 days prior to the inspection. Additionally, it is the Legislature's intent that the department shall, where practicable, conduct live presentations, forums, and outreach programs throughout the state to orient mobilehome owners and park operators on the mobilehome park maintenance inspection program and their rights and obligations under the program.

(g) ~~Any local enforcement agency that relinquishes enforcement authority to the department shall remit to the department fees collected pursuant to paragraph (2) of subdivision (c) of Section 18502 that have not been expended for purposes of that paragraph.~~

~~(h)~~ Each local enforcement agency that has ~~assumed enforcement authority and has~~ collected fees pursuant to paragraph (2) of subdivision (c) of Section 18502, shall provide the department, prior to September 1, 2002, and prior to September 1, 2005, with status reports on its specific inspection program to enable the department to complete the reports to the Legislature required in subdivision ~~(i)~~ *(h)*. Each report shall include information on the number of parks and spaces in its jurisdiction, the number of parks and spaces that have been inspected, the number and types of notices of violations issued against the parks, the number and types of notices of violations issued against the mobilehome owners, the number of notices of violation appealed, and the amount of fees collected and expended for the purpose of the inspection program for the period that the report covers.

~~(i)~~

(h) Notwithstanding Section 7550.5 of the Government Code, the department, prior to January 1, 2003, and prior to January 1, 2006, shall submit reports to

(123)

the Senate Committee on Housing and Community Development, the Senate Select Committee on Mobile and Manufactured Homes, the Assembly Committee on Housing and Community Development, and the Assembly Select Committee on Mobilehomes on the status of the mobilehome park inspection program during the January 1, 2000, to December 31, 2002, and January 1, 2003, to December 31, 2005, periods, respectively. The respective reports shall include information on the total number of parks and spaces in the state, the number of parks and spaces that have been inspected, the number of notices of violations issued against the parks, the number of notices of violations issued against the mobilehome owners, the number of notices of violations appealed, and the amount of fees collected and expended for the purpose of the inspection program. The reports shall separate the information according to parks inspected by local enforcement agencies, parks inspected by the department, and total program activity. The January 1, 2006, report shall include any recommendations for changes to make the inspection program operate more effectively in the event that the program is extended beyond January 1, 2007.

~~(j)~~

(i) This section shall remain in effect only until January 1, 2007, and as of that date is repealed, unless a later enacted statute, which is enacted before January 1, 2007, deletes or extends that date.

SEC. 5. Section 18670 of the Health and Safety Code is amended to read:

18670. The department shall adopt the rules and regulations regarding electrical wiring, fixtures, and equipment installed in parks which the department determines are reasonably necessary for the protection of life and property and to carry out the purposes of this part. The department shall adopt and submit building standards for approval pursuant to Chapter 4 (commencing with Section 18935) of Part 2.5 for the purposes described in this section. The building standards published in the State Building Standards Code and the

(124)

other rules and regulations adopted by the department shall be applicable to all electrical wiring, fixtures, and equipment installed within permanent buildings, except within a park in a city, county, or city and county which has adopted and is enforcing an electrical code imposing restrictions equal to or greater than the restrictions imposed by the building standards published in the State Building Standards Code and the other rules and regulations adopted by the department ~~and which city, county, or city and county is the enforcement agency~~.

SEC. 6. Section 18691 of the Health and Safety Code is amended to read:

18691. The department shall adopt rules and regulations which it determines are reasonably consistent with generally recognized fire protection standards, governing conditions relating to the prevention of fire or for the protection of life and property against fire in parks. The department shall adopt and submit building standards for approval pursuant to Chapter 4 (commencing with Section 18935) of Part 2.5 for the purposes described in this section within permanent buildings.

The regulations adopted by the department shall be applicable in all parks, except in a park within a city, county, or city and county which has adopted and is enforcing a fire prevention code imposing restrictions equal to or greater than the restrictions imposed by ~~such~~ *those* building standards published in the State Building Standards Code and the other state regulations adopted by the department ~~and which city, county, or city and county is the enforcement agency~~.

~~Notwithstanding the provisions of this section, the rules and regulations adopted by the department relating to the installation of water supply and fire hydrant systems shall not apply within parks constructed, or approved for construction, prior to January 1, 1966.~~

A park constructed, or approved for construction prior to January 1, 1966, shall, on or before January 1, 2005, meet the Fire Protection Association Standard No. 24, 1977 or the rules or regulations adopted by the local enforcement

(125)

agency regarding fire protection if those are more stringent. The owner or management of a park required to upgrade its fire protection because it was previously exempt from this section shall not pass on more than 10 percent of the costs to perform these upgrades to the residents.

SEC. 7. Notwithstanding Section 17610 of the Government Code, if the Commission on State Mandates determines that this act contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement to local agencies and school districts for those costs shall be made pursuant to Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division 4 of Title 2 of the Government Code. If the statewide cost of the claim for reimbursement does not exceed one million dollars ($1,000,000), reimbursement shall be made from the State Mandates Claims Fund.

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(126)

Date of Hearing: April 26, 2000

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
Alan Lowenthal, Chair
AB 2605 (Cardenas) - As proposed to be amended: April 26, 2000

SUBJECT : Mobilehome parks; standards enforcement

SUMMARY : Requires local jurisdictions to enforce the Mobilehome Parks Act.
Specifically, this bill :

1) Requires a city, county, or city and county in California to assume enforcement authority for the Mobilehome Parks Act (MPA) by January 1, 2002.

2) Shifts the duty to enter and inspect mobilehome parks from Department of Housing and Community Development to the local jurisdiction where the park is located.

3) Removes provisions of law that allow local jurisdictions to relinquish enforcement of the MPA to HCD.

4) Removes HCD's authority to assume control of the enforcement activities of a local jurisdiction that is not properly enforcing the MPA.

5) Maintains HCD's role as evaluator of local jurisdictions' enforcement of the MPA and any regulations adopted by them.

6) Removes the requirement that cities relinquishing enforcement authority over mobilehome parks remit the proceeds of the fees collected to administer the program to HCD.

7) Establishes the Mobilehome Park Inspection Fund within HCD in the amount of $8 million to recover the deficit costs of their inspection programs at $4 per space.

EXISTING LAW

1) Establishes the MPA to assure the safety, health, and general

welfare of mobilehome park residents (Health and Safety Code Section 18300).

1) The MPA supersedes all local ordinances relating to mobilehome

parks with a few exceptions and authorizes HCD to adopt regulations to implement the act.

1) Permits any city, county, or city and county to assume enforcement responsibility with HCD's approval.

1) Permits any city, county, or city and county to delegate enforcement authority to HCD.

1) Provides the Mobilehome Park Inspection Program (Health and Safety Code Section 18400) which:

a) Establishes the parameters, procedures, and requirements to carry out mobilehome park inspections.

b) Establishes a process for citing and remedying violations according to the three categories.

c) Sets a statewide fee of $4 per space for the administration of the inspection program (Health and Safety Code Section 18502(2)).

6) Authorizes HCD to adopt rules and regulations regarding fire protection that are reasonably consistent with generally accepted fire protection standards (Health and Safety Code Section 18691).

7) Exempts parks built before January 1, 1966 from rules and regulations adopted by HCD relating to installation of water supply and fire hydrant systems (Health and Safety Code Section 18691).

FISCAL EFFECT : Decrease in fees paid to HCD to administer the MPA. Local cost for enforcement of the Mobilehome Inspection Program may be approximately $3.7 million.

COMMENTS :

On February 4, 2000 the California State Senate Select Committee on Mobile and Manufactured Homes held a hearing on Mobilehome Park Fire Hydrant Safety. Two months before the hearing on December 19, 1999 a fire in a mobilehome park in Compton killed a grandmother and her two grandchildren. When the Compton Fire

Department arrived that night, the home was fully engulfed in fire. Efforts to fight the fire were delayed as the fire department tried to hook up their hoses to two different hydrants in the park, but learned that the hydrants were not connected to the city's water main. They ultimately put the blaze out with the 1,000 gallons of water carried on their truck.

At the hearing representatives from the city of Compton and the owner of the El Rancho Mobilehome park testified about an ongoing disagreement between them over the installation of fire hydrants in the park. In 1997, the City of Compton passed an ordinance requiring the13 mobilehome parks within the city limits to install fire hydrants. The owner of El Rancho hired a contractor to install 4 hydrants in 1998 at a cost of approximately $50,000. After the hydrants were installed, the park owner learned that he would have to tie the hydrants into the city water system on the far side, rather than the park side of the street at an additional cost of $17,000.

A dispute arose between the park owner and the city over whether the city or the park would pay the additional cost. Upon inquiry to HCD by a representative of WMA in March 1999 about the issue, HCD responded that under the MPA, the city had no authority to require hydrants in parks within the city. Negotiations continued between the park owner and the city and in December 1999, a few days before the fire, the city approved

the park's permit to install the water line.

The Senate Select Committee's hearing revealed that implementation of the MPA can be problematic with regard to local control. The reason Compton could not require fire hydrants in local mobilehome parks was because it had ceded enforcement authority to HCD in the 1980's. Under the MPA, any city that assumes enforcement authority can impose fire prevention standards greater than those adopted by HCD. Following the fire, Compton's city council voted to regain enforcement authority over the mobilehome parks within the city.

Arguments in support:

The author of this bill argues that current law allowing MPA enforcement authority to shift from local to state jurisdiction creates inconsistencies throughout the state. The majority of the 4,959 mobilehome parks in California are under the

jurisdiction of HCD while approximately 88 local government agencies have chosen to retain local control over the parks in their communities.

The author asserts that local governments have a better understanding of their communities' needs and issues in relation to mobilehome parks and would be better able to respond to the concerns of park owners and residents. According to the author, local agencies that enforce the MPA have seen a significant decrease in the number of complaints they receive regarding parks in their jurisdiction.

Arguments in opposition:

The League of California Cities is in opposition to this bill as introduced. The League has raised concerns over the lack of local jurisdictions' ability to recover costs for enforcement. The author has agreed to amend the bill to provide state funding for additional costs imposed on local jurisdictions. At the time of drafting this analysis, it is unclear whether those

amendments will satisfy the League's concerns.

Mobilehome park owners argue that implementation of this bill will be problematic and may adversely affect their industry. The Western Manufacture Housing Communities Association (WMA) believes that if this bill passes there will be no uniformity in the enforcement of the MPA from one community to the next. The WMA states that this will create confusion in the manufactured/mobilehome industry.

According to WMA some local governments can adopt rules and regulations which are more stringent than others. The organization says that in some instances, some local jurisdictions may impose tougher, more expensive standards than those currently in place. The California Mobilehome Park Owners Alliance also opposes this bill on the grounds that local jurisdictions may raise enforcement standards and increase the cost of the inspection program which will be passed on to park owners and residents.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION :

Support

Golden State Mobilehome Owners League

Opposition

California Building Officials
California Mobilehome Park Owners Alliance
League of California Cities
Western Manufactured Housing Communities Association

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