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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Bonney Lake Adopts Ordinance Repealing Fire Sprinkler Requirements for New Single-Family Homes

On June 2, 2026, the Bonney Lake City Council adopted Ordinance AB26-34, repealing the City's local residential fire sprinkler requirements and aligning local regulations with Washington State building code standards.

As our region continues to face a housing affordability crisis, this action represents a meaningful step toward reducing unnecessary regulatory costs while maintaining all state-required health and fire safety standards.

During the discussion surrounding AB26-34, participants highlighted the difficult balance between public safety, housing affordability, and personal freedom. Councilmembers, community members, and fire officials shared differing perspectives on the costs and benefits of residential sprinkler systems.

Opponents of the measure spoke about the possibility of increased fire risk that could arise as a result of repealing the ordinance, especially for those with disabilities or the elderly who struggle with mobility. In contrast, proponents argued that the added benefits of sprinklers in terms of preventing further loss of life are ambiguous in situations where fire alarms are fully operational in the home. Additionally, many in the room noted the disparity between the official fire sprinkler installation estimates and their own experiences regarding the added cost of installation. Every individual who spoke noted that the cost of installation exceeded official estimates by more than \$10,000. Lastly, council members in favor of the change noted an important point: no one would be prevented from installing fire sprinklers as a result of this change; rather, the decision would be left to personal judgment and discretion.

In a letter submitted to the City Council, the Master Builders Association of Pierce County additionally noted that modern homes already incorporate numerous fire safety protections, including smoke detectors, fire alarms, improved building materials, and established means of egress, all of which are highly effective at preventing loss of life when adequately maintained. The Association also emphasized that housing affordability is itself a public welfare issue, as rising housing insecurity can have adverse second-order consequences for human health as a result of increased financial stress and physical vulnerability - concerns that should be incorporated into the cost benefit analysis.

"This decision recognizes that public policy requires balancing competing priorities," said MBAPC Executive Director Gretchen Guitierrez. "While fire safety remains critically important, local governments must also consider the impact that additional regulations have on housing costs and affordability."

The Master Builders Association of Pierce County appreciates the Bonney Lake City Council's thoughtful consideration of this issue and is pleased that residents will now have the ability to make their own

decisions regarding residential fire sprinkler systems while continuing to benefit from Washington State's comprehensive building and fire safety codes.

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About the Master Builders Association of Pierce County

The Master Builders Association of Pierce County represents more than 800 member companies involved in the residential construction industry. The Association advocates for policies that promote housing affordability, economic opportunity, and responsible growth throughout Pierce County.