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November 2, 2009

Michael L. Ticktin, Esq.
Chief, Legislative Analysis
New Jersey Department of Community Affairs
P.O. Box 802
Trenton, NJ 08625

Dear Mr. Ticktin:

I am contacting you on behalf of the approximately 50,000 members of the New Jersey Association of REALTORS® (NJAR®) to express concerns over the Department of Community Affairs rule proposal to amend the Uniform Construction Code in Volume 41, Number 17 of the *New Jersey Register*.

After reviewing the proposal, NJAR® is concerned with the cost increases that will be associated with purchasing newly constructed homes in New Jersey, particularly the costs associated with mandatory sprinklers. According to the Housing Affordability Impact Statement, requiring sprinklers to be installed in new homes will cost homeowners between \$800.00 and \$2,500.00. NJAR® believes that these types of requirements should not be imposed at a time of economic uncertainty in our state and country.

NJAR® would also like to comment on the potential for the costs associated with the proposed energy efficiency requirements to be passed along to new homebuyers. The proposal states that the new energy requirements will lead to annual cost savings of \$235.00, or a total of \$1,645.00 over seven years. However, the energy efficiency testing requirements in the rule proposal, such as for duct testing, cost approximately \$2,100.00. If the costs for this testing were passed on to homeowners, it would take approximately nine years for them to recoup the amount of money it took to conduct these tests.

While NJAR® understands the importance of fire prevention and energy efficiency, we feel that those purchasing new homes should be given the option of having fire sprinklers and more energy efficient properties rather than having it be required of them by the government. In addition, NJAR® would like to see that these measures be incentive-based or that rebates be offered to new homebuyers were these proposals to take effect.

Thank you for taking the time to view our comments and please feel free to contact me at any time at (732) 494-4720 or dtomson@njar.com.

Sincerely,

Douglas M. Tomson
Director of Legislative Affairs

cc: Acting Commissioner Charles A. Richman, New Jersey Department of Community Affairs