

110TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 582

To amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to classify automatic fire sprinkler systems as 5-year property for purposes of depreciation.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

FEBRUARY 14, 2007

Mr. SMITH (for himself, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, Mr. REED, and Mr. ALEXANDER) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Finance

A BILL

To amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to classify automatic fire sprinkler systems as 5-year property for purposes of depreciation.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-
2 tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

4 This Act may be cited as the “Fire Sprinkler Incentive Act of 2007”.

6 SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

7 The Congress finds that—

8 (1) the publication of the original study and
9 comprehensive list of recommendations in America

1 Burning, written in 1974, requesting advances in
2 fire prevention through the installation of automatic
3 sprinkler systems in existing buildings have yet to be
4 fully implemented;

5 (2) fire departments responded to approxi-
6 mately 1,600,000 fires in 2005;

7 (3) there were 3,675 non-terrorist related
8 deaths in the United States and almost 17,925 civil-
9 ian injuries resulting from fire in 2005;

10 (4) 87 firefighters were killed in 2005;

11 (5) fire caused \$10,672,000,000 in direct prop-
12 erty damage in 2005, and sprinklers are responsible
13 for a 70 percent reduction in property damage from
14 fires in public assembly, educational, residential,
15 commercial, industrial and manufacturing buildings;

16 (6) fire departments respond to a fire every 20
17 seconds, a fire breaks out in a structure every 61
18 seconds and in a residential structure every 79 sec-
19 onds in the United States;

20 (7) the Station Nightclub in West Warwick,
21 Rhode Island, did not contain an automated sprin-
22 kler system and burned down, killing 99 people on
23 February 20, 2003;

24 (8) due to an automated sprinkler system, not
25 a single person was injured from a fire beginning in

1 the Fine Line Music Café in Minneapolis after the
2 use of pyrotechnics on February 17, 2003;

3 (9) the National Fire Protection Association
4 has no record of a fire killing more than 2 people
5 in a completely sprinklered public assembly, edu-
6 cational, institutional or residential building where
7 the system was properly installed and fully oper-
8 ational;

9 (10) sprinkler systems dramatically improve the
10 chances of survival of those who cannot save them-
11 selves, specifically older adults, young children and
12 people with disabilities;

13 (11) the financial cost of upgrading fire counter
14 measures in buildings built prior to fire safety codes
15 is prohibitive for most property owners;

16 (12) many State and local governments lack
17 any requirements for older structures to contain
18 automatic sprinkler systems;

19 (13) under the present straight-line method of
20 depreciation, there is a disincentive for building safe-
21 ty improvements due to an extremely low rate of re-
22 turn on investment; and

23 (14) the Nation is in need of incentives for the
24 voluntary installation and retrofitting of buildings
25 with automated sprinkler systems to save the lives of

1 countless individuals and responding firefighters as
2 well as drastically reduce the costs from property
3 damage.

4 SEC. 3. CLASSIFICATION OF AUTOMATIC FIRE SPRINKLER 5 SYSTEMS.

6 (a) IN GENERAL.—Subparagraph (B) of section
7 168(e)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (relating
8 to 5-year property) is amended by striking “and” at the
9 end of clause (v), by striking the period at the end of
10 clause (vi) and inserting “, and”, and by inserting after
11 clause (vi) the following:

17 (b) ALTERNATIVE SYSTEM.—The table contained in
18 section 168(g)(3)(B) of the Internal Revenue Code of
19 1986 (relating to special rule for certain property assigned
20 to classes) is amended by inserting after the item relating
21 to subparagraph (B)(iii) the following:

“(B)(vii) 7”.

22 (c) DEFINITION OF AUTOMATIC FIRE SPRINKLER
23 SYSTEM.—Subsection (i) of section 168 of the Internal
24 Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end
25 the following:

1 “(18) AUTOMATED FIRE SPRINKLER SYSTEM.—

2 The term ‘automated fire sprinkler system’ means
3 those sprinkler systems classified under one or more
4 of the following publications of the National Fire
5 Protection Association—

6 “(A) NFPA 13, Installation of Sprinkler
7 Systems,

8 “(B) NFPA 13 D, Installation of Sprin-
9 kler Systems in One and Two Family Dwellings
10 and Manufactured Homes, and

11 “(C) NFPA 13 R, Installation of Sprinkler
12 Systems in Residential Occupancies up to and
13 Including Four Stories in Height.”.

14 (d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by
15 this section shall apply to property placed in service after
16 the date of the enactment of this Act.

