



National Electrical Manufacturers Association

March 29, 2019

Senator Rob Wagner, Chair  
Senate Committee on Education  
Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem Oregon 97301  
Via Email: [sed.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov](mailto:sed.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov)

**RE: SB 1017 – “Relating to carbon monoxide alarms in school facilities; declaring an emergency.”**

Dear Chairman Wagner and Members of the Senate Education Committee:

On behalf of the member companies of the National Electrical Manufacturers Association (NEMA) Fire, Life Safety, Security & Emergency Communications product section, I am writing to express **support** of the legislation referenced above, which is scheduled to be heard before your committee on April 1<sup>st</sup>.

SB 1017 addresses and responds to a life safety hazard that potentially threatens all Oregon residents, but is particularly dangerous to children and other vulnerable populations. Carbon monoxide (CO) has been termed the “stealth killer” because it cannot be detected by human senses. Victims of CO exposure experience flu-like symptoms, ultimately progressing to unconsciousness, brain damage and even death. The US Center for Disease Control attributes more than 400 deaths nationally each year to CO poisoning, along with tens of thousands of emergency room visits.

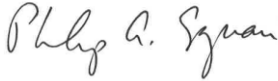
Children are especially at risk from the effects of CO exposure, which therefore creates a critical need for CO detection and warning systems in schools. Examples of equipment commonly found in schools that emit CO include water heaters, gas furnaces and gas stoves, and most schools have more than one source.

Oregon law currently requires CO detection in residences and other buildings where people sleep, such as hotels. But the law does not mandate similar protection in schools, where children spend most of their time. Other states that have enacted CO detection requirements in K-12 schools include California, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Illinois, Maine, and Maryland. In addition, the 2018 iteration of the National Fire Protection Association Code 101 (the Life Safety Code®) includes a requirement for CO detection in “new educational occupancies” – *i.e.*, new schools. Oregon has not yet integrated this element into its state code structure, which provides another impetus for the legislature to take action.

Please do not wait for a tragic incident to occur before acting to mitigate this hazard. SB1017 will help ensure that children, teachers, and school officials are safe from the hazards of carbon monoxide poisoning and we urge the committee to move this measure forward.

Accompanying this letter is a one-page "Issue Paper" that highlights the importance of CO detection more broadly. If you have additional questions concerning CO detection devices, systems, or technical standards, please do not hesitate to use NEMA as a resource. Feel free to contact Mark Kohorst ([mar\\_kohorst@nema.org](mailto:mar_kohorst@nema.org), 703-841-3249) for assistance.

Respectfully,



Philip Squair  
Vice President, Government Relations

Cc: Members, Committee on Education

NEMA is the association of electrical equipment manufacturers, founded in 1926 and headquartered in Arlington, Virginia. Its member companies manufacture a diverse set of products including power transmission and distribution equipment, lighting systems, factory automation and control systems, and medical diagnostic imaging systems. Worldwide annual sales of NEMA-scope products exceed \$120 billion. NEMA's Fire, Life Safety, Security & Emergency Communication Section includes leading manufactures of fire, smoke, and carbon monoxide detection and warning equipment.