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## **Governor-Commissioned Report Concludes Fire Sprinklers Would Have Saved Lives**

Orland Park, IL (October 1, 2004) – An independent report has confirmed that an automatic fire sprinkler system in the Cook County Administration Building would have saved lives in the October 17, 2003 fire that killed six people.

“This isn’t news,” said Tom Lia, executive director of the Northern Illinois Fire Sprinkler Advisory Board (NIFSAB). “These findings are precisely what we expected and what NIFSAB and other safety advocates called for immediately following the tragedy,” Lia said.

“What is news is that despite the fact there are two sprinkler retrofit ordinances to choose from, people’s lives remain at risk,” Lia said. “Now almost an entire year has gone by and the City’s Building Committee is delaying a vote in their search for alternatives to sprinklers and possible dilution of the Mayor’s Life Safety Evaluation procedure.”

Following the Cook County Administration building fire last October, Mayor Richard Daley and Ald. Edward Burke (14<sup>th</sup>) introduced separate sprinkler ordinances. Daley’s ordinance requires all commercial buildings be retrofit. It does not include residential buildings and designated landmarks. It gives commercial buildings until 2016 to comply. Burke’s ordinance requires sprinklers in all high-rise buildings, commercial and residential. Burke’s ordinance requires fire sprinklers to be installed by 2008 and would follow the recommendations of the Chicago High Rise Commission, the Tri-Data Study, FEMA’s (Federal Emergency Management Agency) “America Burning” report, FEMA’s Residential Initiative, and FEMA’s Life Safety Summit Report 2004 for the protection of firefighters.

“It’s unfortunate that as we approach the one-year anniversary of this terrible loss, more than 800 other high-rise buildings in the city remain unprotected by fire sprinklers,” Lia said. “Moving forward with a sprinkler retrofit ordinance would offer the kind of protection that could spare other families and loved ones the anguish the Cook County fire victims’ families have suffered. Chicago’s leaders should have made a progressive step forward by now, but instead they have opted to explore alternative to fire sprinklers, or what I call the ABS strategy,” Lia said. “Anything but sprinklers.”