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2024 IFC TAG members,

My name is Chris Smith, and I am the President of Empire Fire Protection. I am reaching out to request your support for the proposed amendment to WAC 51-54-0904.

As a fire protection contractor in Washington, having a skilled workforce is essential to performing the specialized tasks outlined in this WAC. The proposed amendment, which would allow current journey-level certificate holders, in conjunction with a COC-ITT certification through the Washington State Fire Marshal's office, ensures that fire protection work is carried out by qualified professionals. This change will help expand the workforce beyond the approximately 21 individuals currently available statewide, allowing more trained personnel to contribute to this critical industry.

Without this amendment, both the industry and business owners will face challenges due to a shortage of contractors and technicians, potentially leading to delays in essential work. More importantly, it could compromise public safety, as deficiencies in fire suppression systems may go unaddressed due to the lack of available resources.

Your consideration and support for this amendment will make a significant impact on the fire protection industry and public safety across Washington.

Respectfully,

Chris Smith
President
Empire Fire Protection