

Commercial Fire-Sprinkler AHJ Intelligence SaaS

Killgate evidence-first research validation | \$249/month per company

VERDICT: RESEARCH_PASS

Confidence: 0.78

Public evidence clears the Killgate research gate. This means the idea is worth direct buyer validation. It is not GO and is not permission to build yet.

Executive conclusion. The strongest signal is not merely that permitting is annoying. Fire-sprinkler practitioners encounter AHJ-specific requirements, interpretations, fees, testing expectations, and submission practices that vary by jurisdiction, while municipalities publish materially different sprinkler-specific procedures. The largest risk is competitive: jurisdiction-specific permitting intelligence and checklist generation already exist in broader construction software. The unproven thesis is whether a focused \$249/month sprinkler-specific product is sufficiently better for small contractors.

Locked hypothesis / Contract ID

Contract ID: KG-FS-AHJ-249-20260828-01

Field	Locked hypothesis
ICP	Independent U.S. commercial fire-sprinkler contractor working across roughly 5-25 AHJs
Provisional size assumption	Small enough that permitting knowledge remains distributed among owners, estimators, designers, PMs, and office staff rather than a dedicated permitting department
Problem	Staff repeatedly research local sprinkler permit/submittal/inspection requirements, depend on memory or AHJ calls, and risk delays, missed costs, or resubmissions
Offer	Enter job location + basic project type -> receive a maintained jurisdiction-specific checklist covering permit requirements, documents/forms, links, fees, lead times, inspection procedures, and local code/adoption differences
Price	\$249/month per company, unchanged
Not included	Permit filing/expediting, engineering/design review, guarantee of AHJ approval
Current alternatives	AHJ websites/portals, calls/emails, internal notes and institutional knowledge, UpCodes, general permitting platforms such as PermitFlow/GreenLite, and existing fire-protection operating software
Economic thesis	Avoided research/rework/delay plus improved estimating consistency is worth at least \$249/month to the target contractor

Contract integrity: The offer was not reinterpreted after competitors were identified.

Gate scoreboard

Research gate	Result	Evidence
Contract locked before scoring	PASS	Locked before evidence evaluation
>=3 directly relevant public sources	PASS	Well above threshold
>=2 independent source groups	PASS	Practitioners, independent AHJs, software-review sources, vendors
Direct public evidence of pain	PASS	Multiple sprinkler practitioners describe AHJ variation, unexpected requirements, redesign/research burden
Workaround/current behavior evidence	PASS	Code research, asking peers, contacting AHJs, municipality-specific practices
Spend/budget proxy	PASS	Permit/inspection costs can reach hundreds or thousands; small sprinkler businesses already buy specialized compliance/workflow SaaS
Negative evidence actively sought	PASS	Strong incumbent/general-permitting overlap found
>=2 source-backed supporting claims	PASS	Yes
>=2 material constraints/disconfirmers	PASS	Competitive bundling + trust/freshness/data-liability problem
Fatal unresolved technical/legal constraint	PASS	None established; data quality is serious but not currently fatal
Qualified buyers interviewed	NOT YET TESTED	0 / 8 required
Strong-pain direct buyers	NOT YET TESTED	Need >=30%
\$249 price-positive buyers	NOT YET TESTED	Need >=4 unless payment exception applies
Paid pilots/deposits	NOT YET TESTED	Need >=2

Mechanism scoreboard

Mechanism	Role	Status	Assessment
Correctly resolve location -> responsible fire/building AHJ(s)	CORE_INPUT	TEST	Technically ordinary, but overlapping city/county/fire-district authority creates edge cases
Maintain current sprinkler-specific AHJ requirements	CORE_VALUE	PLAUSIBLE	Public information exists, but maintaining reliable freshness is operationally demanding
Generate project-specific submission checklist	CORE_VALUE	BUNDLED	GreenLite explicitly generates jurisdiction-specific checklists; PermitFlow performs requirements research
Maintain fees, forms, procedures and lead times	CORE_VALUE	PLAUSIBLE	Individual AHJs publish these, but they change
Local code adoption/amendment intelligence	CORE_INPUT	COMMODITY	UpCodes already covers thousands of jurisdictional adoptions/amendments

Mechanism	Role	Status	Assessment
Sprinkler-specific interpretation/context	CORE_VALUE	TEST	Potential differentiation versus general products, but public research does not prove buyers value it enough
Source provenance, last-verified date, correction workflow	CONSTRAINT	TEST	Likely mandatory for trust; stale information could destroy the product's value

The existence of bundled checklist/code mechanisms does not by itself force a pivot. The remaining economic hypothesis is that vertical specialization, appropriate scope, and \$249/company pricing serve smaller sprinkler contractors better than broad incumbent platforms.

Strongest evidence FOR

1. AHJ variation is real and reaches the sprinkler-design workflow.

Practitioners compared AHJs imposing different local requirements beyond what they understood NFPA standards to require, including different hydraulic safety factors. Another practitioner reported approved plans already under installation when an AHJ demanded a different sprinkler-head approval, potentially forcing redesign. A separate account described one AHJ accepting a 23-year-old flow test while neighboring AHJs required recent tests.

Practitioner discussion: <https://www.reddit.com/r/firePE/comments/y6uaav>

Practitioner discussion: <https://www.reddit.com/r/firePE/comments/eq2nlo>

2. Permit and inspection mistakes have enough financial consequence to make \$249 plausible.

A sprinkler professional with roughly 20 years in sales/design advised estimators to account for inspections and permit fees, noted that AHJs may charge additional inspection fees, and said experienced people still miss items. They described permit-related allowances ranging from roughly \$1,250 historically to as much as \$2,500 depending on municipality. Official fee schedules also show material variation; Seattle lists fire-protection plan review at \$400/hour with a one-hour minimum.

Practitioner discussion: <https://www.reddit.com/r/firePE/comments/ezs80v>

Seattle Fire plan review: <https://www.seattle.gov/fire/business-services/plan-review>

3. The underlying dataset is fragmented and jurisdiction-specific.

Spartanburg publishes its own sprinkler application and plan-submittal checklist and warns that missing required information delays review. Bryan uses a different sprinkler permitting structure with scope-dependent fees and possible additional reinspection charges. San Jose requires specific resubmission procedures when review comments identify corrections or additional forms. The data also changes: Woodland updated fire plan-review fees effective July 1, 2026 and currently states a 14-business-day review period; San Diego published an updated fire-permit fee bulletin in May 2026.

Spartanburg sprinkler permit application: <https://www.cityofspartanburg.org/FormCenter/Fire-Inspection-Permit-Applications-17/Fire-Sprinkler-Permit-Application-112>

Woodland fire plan fees: <https://www.cityofwoodland.gov/1599/New-Fire-Plan-Fees>

4. Small fire-protection companies demonstrably pay for specialized workflow/compliance software.

Inspect Point explicitly targets fire-protection companies from very small teams upward. A self-described small fire-sprinkler company owner said specialized inspection software would effectively pay for itself in one or two inspections. This does not validate \$249 for the proposed product, but it is credible evidence that the ICP is not categorically unwilling to buy vertical SaaS.

Inspect Point reviews: <https://www.capterra.com/p/148287/Inspect-Point/>

Strongest evidence AGAINST

Competition attacks the core mechanism, not just peripheral features. PermitFlow says its Research Agent searches its permitting database and AHJ portals for requirements, fees, and timelines, and claims coverage of roughly 7,000 AHJs. GreenLite describes intake that identifies required permits/documents and generates a jurisdiction-specific checklist. Those are very close to the proposed causal job.

PermitFlow: <https://www.permitflow.com/>

UpCodes is another partial substitute. Its Professional tier was cited at \$59/user/month and includes jurisdiction-specific answers, adoption information, amendments/updates, and checklist-generation functionality across thousands of code jurisdictions.

UpCodes pricing: <https://cms.up.codes/pricing-v4>

This does not establish that these products solve sprinkler permitting well for a 5-25-AHJ small contractor. But it destroys any thesis that merely assembling jurisdictional information and producing a checklist is inherently differentiated.

There is also evidence that generalized permitting services can get jurisdiction identification wrong. A recent verified PermitFlow reviewer complained that the service frequently contacted the wrong jurisdiction and lacked adequate advance research. One negative review cannot establish prevalence, but it highlights precisely the trust failure the proposed product cannot afford.

PermitFlow reviews: <https://www.capterra.com/p/10013903/PermitFlow/reviews/>

Most important commercial gap: No reliable public evidence was found that small sprinkler contractors currently spend \$249/month specifically solving this permitting-research problem, nor evidence showing how frequently the narrow ICP suffers economically meaningful submission failures.

Evidence audit

Category	Audit
Known facts	AHJ-specific sprinkler requirements and interpretations vary; jurisdiction-specific forms, fee structures, resubmission procedures and review times exist; practitioners report unexpected requirements and permit/inspection-cost mistakes; broad permitting platforms already maintain jurisdictional intelligence; sprinkler contractors already purchase vertical SaaS.
Inferences	A narrowly focused sprinkler product may require less setup and deliver more relevant output than broad platforms; one prevented research/rework event could economically justify \$249; contractors operating across 5-25 AHJs are likely more exposed than single-jurisdiction operators.
Unknowns	Actual submissions/month for the target company, monthly research hours, rejection/resubmission rate attributable specifically to missing AHJ requirements, who owns the pain and budget, whether current internal knowledge is actually good enough, whether contractors trust third-party data, and willingness to pay exactly \$249/month.
Contradictions	General permitting competitors already implement much of the proposed workflow; code-adoption intelligence is already purchasable cheaply; the product promise of current requirements creates a substantial trust/liability burden.
Excluded from demand scoring	PermitFlow/GreenLite ROI claims and testimonials because they are seller-created; Inspect Point marketing claims;

Category	Audit
	homeowner/non-buyer sprinkler discussions; generic construction-permitting complaints. These can establish context or product capability, not independent demand.

Why this verdict follows from the locked rules

The locked research rules require directly relevant evidence of pain, current behavior, spend/budget proxies, independent source groups, and active disconfirmation. Those gates clear.

The evidence does not justify RESEARCH_PIVOT yet because competing products do not establish that this narrow ICP is already adequately served at the proposed scope and price. The hypothesis can still be tested unchanged.

It also cannot be GO: there are currently zero qualified direct buyers, zero tested \$249 reactions, and zero paid pilots.

Build-risk memo

The main risk is data operations, not software engineering. An address form, jurisdiction lookup, database and checklist renderer are ordinary implementation work.

The difficult asset is maintaining trustworthy jurisdictional data. A wrong AHJ, stale fee, superseded PDF, changed inspection procedure, or missed local amendment can make the product worse than the contractor's existing habit of calling the fire marshal.

Therefore, a nationwide crawler/database should not be built first. The moat, if one exists, will probably be the quality and operational reliability of sprinkler-specific jurisdictional knowledge, not the checklist UI.

FEASIBILITY_REQUIRED: Not triggered. No unusual technical capability presently carries the economic thesis.

Minimum next action

Run 8 qualified-buyer tests before building the database. Recruit owners, operations managers, estimators/design managers, or PMs at independent sprinkler contractors actually operating across 5-25 AHJs. Require each buyer to walk through their last two real permit submissions rather than discussing the problem hypothetically.

1. Show me how you determined everything required before this last sprinkler submittal.
2. What did you have to look up, call about, or already know?
3. In the last 90 days, show me a project where an AHJ requirement caused a resubmission, missed cost, additional trip, inspection problem, or delay.
4. How often do you submit sprinkler permits in a normal month, and across how many AHJs?
5. What do you currently maintain internally so you do not have to research the same jurisdiction again?
6. What would make you unwilling to rely on a third-party jurisdiction checklist?
7. Present the unchanged offer and say \$249/month per company. Record the reaction to that exact price.

For buyers with real pain, manually create the checklist for their next project as a concierge pilot and ask for an actual paid pilot/deposit rather than building automation first.

What would change the verdict

Direction	Trigger
Upgrade path	>=8 qualified buyers; >=30% showing strong pain with recent real examples; >=4 positive reactions to the exact \$249 price unless payment already supersedes that gate; ultimately >=2 verifiable

Direction	Trigger
	paid pilots/deposits.
Downgrade toward PIVOT/KILL	Contractors encounter the issue only occasionally; existing shared notes/AHJ relationships solve it sufficiently; PermitFlow/UpCodes/current fire software already covers requirements economically; or after 20 qualified buyers the unchanged hypothesis produces fewer than two paid pilots.

Highest-information unresolved question

Will a small multi-AHJ sprinkler contractor pay \$249/month specifically to outsource the maintenance and retrieval of its jurisdictional permitting knowledge?

Public research cannot answer that. Direct buyer validation must.