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Concrete Products.

Concrete interests ensure code provisions for taller wood buildings hit brick wall

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Written by Concrete News

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Convening in Memphis for International Code Council Committee Action Hearings, National Ready Mixed Concrete Association and allied-industry representatives helped defeat a proposal allowing wood-framed structures up to nine stories—four higher than the 2015 International Building Code permits for such construction.

The late-April hearings were part of a 2015-2017 development cycle leading to 2018 International Building Code publication. NRMCA staff characterizes them as bringing “significant wins along with expected losses for the concrete industry,” the latter relating to proposals promoting greater fire robustness and resiliency for the 2018 IBC. NRMCA Vice President, Sustainability Tien Peng, along with Portland Cement Association and Masonry Alliance for Codes & Standards representatives, offered testimony resulting in preliminary 2018 IBC language *not allowing* the nine-story threshold for Type IV (heavy timber) construction; firewalls constructed with gypsum board-enclosed, cross-laminated timber; combustible-material substitutes for Type III construction (noncombustible exterior walls); and, exclusion of occupied roofs as a story, among others. Concrete groups will continue advocacy of provisions mandating, or friendly to, noncombustible material specifications in all appropriate conditions.

The Memphis hearings also saw general public and fire service stakeholders—mindful of the January 2015 conflagration that consumed more than half of the 408-unit, wood-framed Avalon at Edgewater apartment complex in northern New Jersey—express support for limits to combustible wood construction. Additional information on the ICC Committee Action Hearings can be obtained at www.iccsafe.org.



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