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CalGreen Development for California's Sustainable Future

Additional submitted attachment is included below.



Lead Commissioner Hearing - 2022 California Green Building Standards Code California Energy Commission

August 6, 2021 | 09:00 AM - 04:00 PM

Comments submitted verbally

My name is Michael Malinowski; I am speaking today on behalf of the 11,000 design professional members of the American Institute of Architects, California. Our members are the architects of the built environment in our state and beyond. In our work, we operate as business people; as professionals, we take our responsibilities seriously as stewards of the built environment. In light of this stewardship role, our 60-person board of directors announced a few days ago a formal declaration of a climate emergency, joining the nearly 2000 other entities world wide that have acknowledged that we are at a critical tipping point and that bold, decisive action is urgently necessary.

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As CEC staff and commissioner McAllister know, 18 months ago AIACA submitted a code change petition to bring to CalGreen a zero-carbon design framework to appendix A5 as an optional measure for large new commercial and multifamily buildings. While we are disappointed that this modest move does not have a place on today's agenda, we plan to continue to CEC; our efforts have brought to light the disconnect between the climate crisis that we all face and the potential role of CalGreen as means to move forward.

It was only two years ago that the city of Berkeley's electrification reach code made headlines around the world. There are now over 40 jurisdictions across CA that have crafted their own, unique green codes; which is a hopeful sign that there is a rising tide to make the changes necessary to address the climate crisis that is daily unfolding before our eyes. It is also a sign that CalGreen itself has not evolved to serve as the aspirational, forward looking beacon that it was when it launched in 2008.

Unique among codes, CalGreen's tier concept is an ideal foundation for getting ahead of the curve and anticipating and supporting rapid changes needed for decarbonization and pervasive and equitable sustainability. Instead, CalGreen has fallen so far behind, that we know in fact that three years from now, it still will not even have within it the term embodied carbon, which we know is of key importance in addressing climate change since recent research shows that even the most efficient new

building can take between 10 and 80 years to simply recoup the greenhouse gas emission impacts caused by its construction.

The current approach of parceling out CalGreen responsibility among state agencies by chapter and section misses the opportunity to look at the big picture, gathering current knowledge, emerging best practices, and forward-looking design parameters that can shape buildings in the near future. The siloed current allocation of responsibility between CEC, CARB, HCD, CBSC and other state agencies misses the chance to have CalGreen lead us to a sustainable future in the rapid and coordinated way that is clearly essential.

The expertise of each of the state entities involved in CalGreen is critically important, but we believe there needs to be a standing committee or commission that bridges the gaps, and can operate on an on-going basis to gather information, best practices, vet them, and promulgate the code language necessary to make them available to California's design professionals through the reach code landscape that is currently our best, most nimble and forward-looking mechanism for change.

Respectfully Submitted

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