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Florida Building Commission Stands Strong for Students

TALLAHASSEE, FL – Earlier this year, the Florida Building Commission requested comment for proposed changes to the Florida Building Code, including a provision to allow certain wood-framed construction techniques to be used in the construction of Florida school board and college buildings. Current policy, section 453.8.3 of the Florida Supplement to the 2015 International Building Code, specifies the construction materials and types to be used in the school buildings, and specifically prohibits wood framing-based construction.

Fortunately, at the behest of the Masonry Association of Florida, Florida Concrete & Products Association, Florida Independent Concrete & Associated Products, Inc., National Ready Mixed Concrete Association, and other groups committed to durable construction for Florida's future, the proposed modifications to allow wood-framing were defeated.

“The Florida Building Commission wisely decided against allowing the use of vulnerable construction methods for the buildings that provide for the Sunshine State's future generations to learn and grow,” said Kevin Lawlor, a spokesperson for Build With Strength. “Resilient construction is absolutely necessary for a region often under siege from the worst Mother Nature can deliver.”

In the aftermath of 1992's Hurricane Andrew, which wrought destruction throughout Florida and was the most expensive natural disaster in history at the time, the [state adopted stronger building codes](#), including efforts to minimize wind and water damage from storms, resulting in the elimination of stick frame houses in south Florida.

According to a study from the [Massachusetts Institute of Technology's \(MIT\) Concrete Sustainability Hub](#) entitled “[A Break-Even Hazard Mitigation Metric](#),” a \$10 million non-engineered wood building could be expected to face more than half a million dollars in hazard related damages over 50 years, while a \$10 million engineered concrete building is expected to face only \$165,000 over the same period. The MIT study confirms the importance of using resilient construction materials in regions prone to extreme weather

events, and serves as a tool that can assist designers, developers and architects looking to build and re-build with durability in mind.

“Requiring the use of noncombustible materials that won’t rot, mold, or warp, and can withstand the full force of hurricane-force winds, is a no brainer for schools,” continued Lawlor. “In Florida, that means concrete, brick & mortar, steel rebar, and not wood-framing.”

Additional Information:

- Case Study: [MIT's Break-Even Hazard Mitigation Metric](#)
- Infographic: [Hazard Mitigation - Weathering the Storm](#)

Learn more at www.buildwithstrength.com.

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