



A COALITION OF THE NATIONAL READY MIXED CONCRETE ASSOCIATION

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Essex County, New Jersey, Adopts Fire Safety Resolution in Support of Stronger Building Codes

Measure Urges Timely Passage of Statewide Legislation

Silver Spring, MD – On Wednesday evening, the Essex County Board of Chosen Freeholders, the governing body for the County of Essex, New Jersey, [adopted a resolution](#) supporting Assembly Bill 5196/Senate Bill 3490, statewide legislation that would amend New Jersey’s construction code for fire safety reasons, and provide an added level of protection for firefighters and residents alike.

The legislation calls for the installation of an automatic sprinkler system in accordance with NFPA 13, measuring the number of stories from the grade plane, using noncombustible materials for construction, and installing a fire barrier with a fire resistance rating of at least two hours that extends from the foundation to the roof.

“The terms included within the resolution would go a long way in securing the well-being of New Jersey’s residents and firefighters,” said Ed Donnelly, president of the New Jersey State Firefighters Mutual Benevolent Association (FMBA), whose members attended the resolution hearing. “The best way to combat a fire is to keep it from starting. Once it’s started, the best strategy is to keep it from spreading, and this legislation provides exactly that.”

In addition to FMBA, local New Jersey coalition members of Build with Strength include: The Professional Fire Fighters Association of New Jersey; the New Jersey State Association of County Fire Marshals; the Brigantine Beach Fire Company; Burlington County Fire Marshal Bob Carr; and Retired FDNY Fire Fighter and Wall Township Councilman Kevin P. Orender.

[In February 2017](#), Essex County was the site of a major fire at a wood-framed apartment complex under construction in Maplewood. The incident came nearly two years after a [massive fire displaced more than 500 residents](#) from an apartment complex of similar construction in Edgewater, located in neighboring Bergen County. There have been [dozens of fires of a similar nature](#) throughout the country over the last several months.

Despite the massive infernos and the calls for stronger building codes, [legislation drafted to help prevent additional fires in New Jersey stalled](#) after facing opposition from groups like the New Jersey Builders Association and the New Jersey Apartment Association – organizations that stand to benefit financially from the use of cheaper, combustible building materials.

“The Freeholders’ resolution is a reaction to the growing risks associated with the use of combustible building materials in our communities,” said Kevin Lawlor, a spokesperson for Build with Strength, a coalition of the National Ready Mixed Concrete Association comprised of fire safety professionals, engineers, architects and industry experts committed to strengthening the nation’s building codes. “We welcome their call for a more durable and resilient New Jersey.”

[A September 2016 poll](#) of 400 registered voters in New Jersey found respondents very supportive of the state making changes to building codes following the devastating Edgewater apartment complex fire in January 2015.

Learn more at www.buildwithstrength.com.

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