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Union City, New Jersey, Adopts Fire Safety Resolution in Support of Stronger Building Codes

Joins Essex County in Local Efforts to Urge Timely Passage of Statewide Legislation

Silver Spring, MD – On Wednesday evening, Union City Commissioners voted unanimously in support of the timely passage of New Jersey 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). “When it comes to combatting a fire, the best offense is a good defense, and this legislation provides exactly that.”

In addition to FMBA, local New Jersey coalition members of Build with Strength include: The Professional Association of Fire Fighters in New Jersey; the New Jersey State Association of County Fire Marshals; the Brigantine Beach Fire Company; the Bricklayers and Allied Crafts – New Jersey; and the Fire Departments of Burlington County and West Orange.

[In February 2017](#), Essex County NJ 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.

“Communities are making it known; fire safety must be the priority in new and existing construction, and that means limiting the use of combustible materials,” 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. “The State of new Jersey needs to listen to the communities throughout the state who are demanding that laws and codes reflect their priorities”

[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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