



A COALITION OF THE NATIONAL READY MIXED CONCRETE ASSOCIATION

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Despite Overwhelming Consensus, A Developer is Looking to Build with Combustible Materials in Newark

Decision to construct tall timber structure comes after Essex County (NJ), which governs City of Newark, endorsed statewide legislation that prohibits such construction

Silver Spring, MD – On Monday, Lotus Equity Group, a New York developer, [announced plans](#) to build a 500,000 square foot building in Newark, New Jersey, to be constructed primarily out of combustible building materials.

The 11-story mixed-use building will feature 2,000 residential units, and would require a special permit to construct due to New Jersey's existing building codes. Newark's existing building code restricts heavy timber construction to 6-stories.

The announcement comes just three months after the Essex County Board of Chosen Freeholders, the governing body for the City of Newark, unanimously [adopted a resolution](#) supporting 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.

"Building and fire codes exist for a reason," said Kevin Lawlor, spokesperson for Build with Strength, a coalition of the National Ready Mixed Concrete Association comprised of fire service professionals, engineers, architects, industry experts and community experts. "Combustible building materials are a safety hazard for residents, firefighters, and properties, and developers need to be conscious of the impact they have on the communities they serve."

The resolution adopted in Essex County was mirrored by local lawmakers in Camden County, Mercer County and the Middlesex County Boards of Freeholders, all of which voted unanimously to adopt similar resolutions to strengthen New Jersey's building codes.

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 push for stronger codes comes after devastating fires in the state in buildings constructed with combustible materials over the past couple years – namely in [Princeton](#), [Maplewood](#) and [Edgewater](#). There have been [dozens of fires of a similar nature](#) throughout the country over the last several few years.

[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.

Local New Jersey coalition members of Build with Strength include: The New Jersey State Firefighters' Mutual Benevolent Association, 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.

Learn more at www.buildwithstrength.com.

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