



A COALITION OF THE NATIONAL READY MIXED CONCRETE ASSOCIATION

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## **Los Angeles Faith Leaders Support Stronger Building Codes**

*Grant AME Church, Bethel LA AME Church, and The Row Church call on City Council to endorse efforts to protect communities from fire*

**Silver Spring, MD** – The leaders of the Grant and Bethel African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Churches in Los Angeles, as well as The Row Church in Los Angeles, recently sent letters to the LA City Council calling on the councilmembers to support efforts that would strengthen the city's building codes for fire safety reasons.

The efforts include a draft ordinance that would encourage the use of the safest and most durable materials in the construction process in order to protect Los Angeles' most vulnerable communities.

"We live in a city with great threats of natural disaster, such as fires and earthquakes, and making sure that our people have the best possible chances of survival is a righteous and grave responsibility," said Pastor Michael Eagle of the Grant AME Church in the letter. "By requiring new developments to use the safest and most durable materials in the construction process, you are improving the potential for a longer and safer life for the thousands upon thousands that live in such buildings, and also for the many righteous folks who work in the building process and those who come in to help in the case of an emergency."

At a time where mid-rise housing developments have been increasingly the site of large, spectacular fires, Build with Strength, a coalition of the National Ready Mixed Concrete Association consisting of community organizations, fire service professionals, architects, engineers and industry experts, has stepped up efforts to mitigate the dangers of fire for communities across the country. In reviewing current building and fire safety codes, the coalition is working to identify areas in need of improvement, particularly in updating building codes by including the use of non-combustible materials to minimize the risk of fires.

"With continuous, positive growth taking place across Los Angeles, new regulations that protect and embrace the diverse communities living and working throughout the city will provide broad and long-term benefits to the many collaborative interests involved in these developments," said Pastor Cue Jn-Marie of The Row Church.

In addition to the three churches, the Build with Strength – Los Angeles coalition includes a number of organizations, including: the LA Housing Partnership, Asian Americans in

Commercial Real Estate (AACRE), California Black Chamber of Commerce, and Southern California Black Chamber of Commerce, Churches in Action, Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice (CLUE), Temple Kol Tikvah, The Los Angeles Civil Rights Association, Los Angeles Shmira Civil Safety Patrol, Los Angeles Urban League, and the Southern California Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.

As the nation's urban population centers become more crowded, the demand for housing is continuing to grow. In order to safeguard these communities, Build with Strength is working to ensure the safety of new buildings, particularly those intended for communities at risk such as low- and moderate-income residents.

"I am concerned about the safety and welfare of my parishioners and of all people within the broader community," added Reverend Bobbie Lee Anderson of the Bethel AME Church. "I urge city leaders to move forward and pass an ordinance as soon as possible."

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