

# BUILD WITH STRENGTH

**A COALITION OF THE NATIONAL READY MIXED CONCRETE ASSOCIATION**

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## **Philadelphia Legislators, Organized Labor, Community Groups and Construction Industry Hold Roundtable Discussion about Safer, Non-Combustible Construction**

*Use of Non-Combustible Materials Stands Out as an Immediate Change That Could Dramatically Improve Fire Safety Standards across Philadelphia*

**Philadelphia, PA** – Build with Strength hosted a roundtable discussion on Thursday morning alongside State Representative Joe Hohenstein, Wayne Miller, Assistant Business Manager of the Philadelphia Building Trades Council and Business Manager of Sprinkler Fitters Local 692, Mark Wildsmith, Vice President of Mid-Atlantic District Council of Plasterers & Cement Masons and National Ready Mixed Concrete Association to discuss their shared commitment to improve safety standards and building codes in Philadelphia in order to keep residents and first responders safe.

“What I’ve found is that we have to focus on building structures that are going to withstand the elements long-term,” said Representative Hohenstein, a vocal proponent for the coalition. “The problem is when construction is so fast, is so rushed, and you don’t have skilled labor and you’re not using materials that can last a hundred years. They’ll last maybe five or ten and place people’s health and safety at risk.”

Amid the disturbing uptick of wood-framed building fires, organized labor leaders of Philadelphia have championed the call for stronger building codes and positive, preventative change.

“Concrete and NFPA13 sprinkler systems are about as safe as you can get, period,” said Wayne Miller, Assistant Business Manager and Business Manager of Sprinkler Fitters Local 692 and member of Build with Strength. “Especially when we look at new construction – it is very important when you tear something down that you build it back up with concrete. It’s good for everyone: it’s good for the people living there, and it’s good for the city of Philadelphia.”

“Fire safety, strength of materials, and quality of the contractors – that’s what makes the difference,” said Mark Wildsmith, Vice President of Mid-Atlantic District Council of Plasterers & Cement Masons. “I mean people live in these buildings, they have families, they have kids. They’re living on the third floor of a stick-built, it’s crazy to me.”

Additional organized labor groups counted among Build with Strength Philadelphia’s coalition members include the Philadelphia Building Trades Council, International Longshoremen’s Association Local 1291,

Philadelphia Jewish Labor Committee, Philadelphia Metal Trades Council, Iron Workers Local Union 405, Cement Masons Local Union 592, Bricklayers & Allied Crafts Local Union 1, Teamsters Local 830, Heat & Frost Insulators & Allied Workers Local Union 14 and Sheet Metal Workers Local Union 19.

Build with Strength, a coalition of the National Ready Mixed Concrete Association (NRMCA), has launched a campaign to educate citizens, local and state officials, and industry experts about the inherent dangers of wood-framed construction, particularly in multi-story, residential and commercial buildings. As a grassroots organization, they work with local elected officials and industry workers, from architects to project managers to advocate for the safety benefits of working with non-combustible construction materials.

Learn more at [www.buildwithstrength.com](http://www.buildwithstrength.com)

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