

BUILD WITH STRENGTH

A COALITION OF THE NATIONAL READY MIXED CONCRETE ASSOCIATION

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City of Worcester Adopts Fire Safety Resolution in Support of Stronger Building Codes

Calls for Passage of Legislation before the State Legislature

Worcester, MA — Recently, the Worcester City Council voted unanimously in support of a resolution to endorse statewide legislation that would amend Massachusetts’ building codes for fire safety reasons and provide an added level of protection for firefighters and residents alike. The move was championed by State Representative Dan Donahue who represents the Worcester area.

“It is important that my priorities in the legislature are supported by those in the communities that I represent. I felt it was important to ensure collective support of this important piece of legislation at all levels of government in the Worcester area,” said Rep. Donahue. “The goal of this legislation is to enhance public safety in Worcester. The city is taking on a new era of economic growth and with that comes a need for housing. It’s important that we are developing and building with the safety of our residents in mind.”

The City of Worcester joins a number of labor and construction industry leaders in support of the legislation. The Build with Strength coalition in Massachusetts includes the following organizations to date: Massachusetts Concrete & Aggregate Producers Association, Mason Contractors Association of Massachusetts, Bricklayers & Allied Craftsmen Union Local 3, Ironworkers Local 7-Boston, International Union of Operating Engineers Local 4, Teamsters Local 25, Steel Framing Industry Association, Northeast Precast Concrete Association, Portland Cement Association, New England Concrete Manufacturers Association, National Stone, Sand, and Gravel Association and American Concrete Pumping Association.

“We commend Rep. Donahue for pushing such an important initiative forward and felt that it was important for him to know that the City of Worcester supports him on this,” said Kate Toomey, Councilor-at-Large, City of Worcester. “We are hopeful that his leadership will lead to action on the legislation so that our housing is safer. In the meantime, the City of Worcester will remain a staunch supporter and advocate for pushing it forward and the passage of this resolution is a clear indicator of that.”

The adopted resolution supports House Bill No. 3844 and Senate Bill 1799 which would amend The Commonwealth of Massachusetts' building code. Measures would include the installation of automatic sprinkler systems in accordance with NFPA 13, measuring the number of stories from the grade plane using combustible materials for construction, installing a fire barrier with fire resistance rating of at least two hours that extends from the foundation to the roof, and providing for a fire watch at construction sites after hours.

The bill was most recently reported favorably to the House Committee on Ways and Means from the Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security. The accompanying bill in the Senate, [S.1799](#), is sponsored by Senator Mike Brady (Second Plymouth and Bristol).

“The resolution is just one small step that the city can take to support this important piece of legislation,” said Joe Petty, Mayor of Worcester. “Housing remains an issue that needs addressed here and across the Commonwealth. We need to make sure that our building codes are up to par, and we will continue to support Rep. Donahue as this legislation progresses. I would encourage the rest of our residents to do the same.”

“Unfortunately, we have a history of some significant fires in this city. Some of these have cost the lives of extraordinary men and women that will be forever missed and appreciated,” said Michael J. Lavoie, Fire Chief for the City of Worcester. “Our line of work is inherently dangerous and comes with risk. This legislation, however, will reduce that risk by putting proper measures in place during construction that drastically lower the chance of a fire and also reduce the speed at which the fire will spread. I am grateful for Rep. Donahue and the Worcester Fire Department is fully supportive of this effort.”

Build with Strength works with communities, lawmakers, and industry employees to advocate for safer, sustainable building materials. Strengthening local and national building codes is among the organization’s top priorities.

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