



AMERICAN WOOD COUNCIL

May 22, 2018

Honorable City Council
201 North Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Attention: Sharon Dickinson, Legislative Assistant, Planning and Land Use Management Committee

RE: PLUM Presentation Relative to DaVinci Apartment Complex Fire- Council File 16-1165

This letter is to transmit testimony regarding the May 22, 2018 PLUM meeting, item 6, a report by the Building and Safety Division regarding policy questions after the Da Vinci construction fire that occurred on December 7, 2014.

The American Wood Council (AWC) is the voice of the North American wood products manufacturing industry, providing information on wood design and regulations. AWC staff experts develop state-of-the-art engineering data, technology, and standards for wood products to assure their safe and efficient design. We are the developers and publishers of both the National Design Specification[®] (NDS[®]) and the Special Design Provisions for Wind and Seismic (SDPWS) that are adopted by reference and form the basis for wood structural design in both the International Building Code and the California Building Code.

This letter is in addition to our letter and testimony at the PLUM committee dated January 9, 2017.

American Wood Council participates in the code development process and is closely monitoring and participating in the International Code Council improvement of Construction Fire Safety related codes.

Summarizing the January 9, 2017, letter there were four code changes that have been incorporated into the 2018 IBC and IFC that we suggested the City of LA should consider adopting and enforcing early.

Since that time, there have been three additional construction fire safety code changes worthy of consideration for early adoption and enforcement that received initial committee approval for the 2021 IBC and IFC. These are:

- F263-18 - updates and strengthens the previously mentioned construction fire safety provisions regarding hot work and fire watch,

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- F264-18 - further strengthens fire watch, site safety plan requirements and processing, and establishes a Site Safety Director position and responsibility,
- F268-18 – clarifies the requirement for fire flow at construction sites.

We believe all of these code changes offer an opportunity to improve the safety of construction sites in LA whether containing combustible material or not.

AWC wants to further bring your attention to State of California Executive Order B-52-18 recently issued by Governor Brown that directs the Office of the State Fire Marshal, Department of Housing and Community Development, The Division of State Architect, the California Building Standards Commission, and the Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development to review 14 recently approved Tall Wood Code Change proposals for the 2021 IBC and consider early adoption during the upcoming intervening code cycle. We believe these regulations offer great promise for increased fire safety while architects and the public push for taller housing development projects. An LA ordinance recently proposed for LA by steel and concrete proponents would prohibit such combustible materials even though they offer superior construction.

Finally with respect to that competing industry proposed ordinance, we suggest the Citizens of LA deserve a more thorough and deliberate process for education. The proposed ordinance, though not a part of this hearing, would potentially have the following effects for the Citizens of LA:

1. Reduce construction site safety.
2. Allow for some finished buildings to be less energy efficient.
3. More directly increase housing construction costs as energy costs increase.
4. Potentially decrease the seismic and fire performance of depending on building system.
5. Limit or preclude the opportunity to benefit in LA from technology advances touted in the Governor's Executive Order.

We look forward to the opportunity to closely work with City Council and Staff to educate and assist with work needed to advance and educate so that informed policy decisions can be made that benefit the Citizens of LA rather than narrow special interest groups. We feel it is important that potential solutions are vetted and approved through a public process rather than as drafted and pushed by special interests.

Sincerely,



Dennis Richardson PE, CBO, CASp
West Coast Regional Manager