

**PUBLIC COMMENT on PROPOSED BUILDING STANDARDS**  
For Publication in Title 24, California Code of Regulations

See instructions for completing this form on Page 2.

**Commenter Contact Information**

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**Proposed Building Standard**

Title 24 Part #: (select one) Part 2.5 ☒ Section #: \_\_\_\_\_

Proposing State Agency Office of the State Fire Marshall

This comment is intended  
for review during:  
(select one)  
☐ Code Advisory Committee  
☒ 45-Day Comment Period  
☐ 15-Day Comment Period  
☐ Commission Meeting

Your recommendation based on the criteria of Health and Safety Code Section 18930(a)  
printed on the back of this form is: (select one)

☒ Approve ☐ Disapprove  
☐ Further Study Required ☐ Approve as Amended

**In support of your recommendation above, provide the rationale based on the criteria of Health and Safety Code Section 18930(a) printed on the back of this form. If you recommend anything other than approve, cite the criteria in your comment. If you oppose a proposed building standard, offer a solution or alternative for the state agency to consider. Please use separate pages if your comment does not fit in this space.**

**Attachments?**

☒ Check if you have attached additional pages. The number of pages attached is: 1

**For CBSC Office Use Only** Date Received: \_\_\_\_\_ Rulemaking Item #: \_\_\_\_\_

October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2018  
California Building Standards Commission  
2525 Natomas Park Drive, Suite 130  
Sacramento, CA 95833-2936

**RE: Support for the Office of the State Fire Marshal Proposal: Flammability Standards for Building Insulation Materials**

Dear Members of the California Building Standards Commission:

I am writing in support of the California State Fire Marshal's proposal "Flammability Standards for Building Insulation Materials" which would allow the use of polystyrene building insulation without added flame retardants in below-grade applications.

My name is Ernest Pacheco. I am the Environmental Programs Coordinator for the Communications Workers of America (CWA) District 9. CWA District 9 represents over 50,000 California workers. CWA members work in telecommunications and information technology, the airline industry, news media, broadcast and cable television, education, health care and public service, law enforcement, manufacturing and other fields.

I am aware of extensive research documenting the harmful impact of flame retardant chemicals on the general public, and specifically on vulnerable worker populations. Workers can be continuously exposed to chemicals from building materials throughout the construction process: during storage, installation, and demolition. Flame retardants used in building insulation have been associated with neurological and reproductive impairment, cancer, and ecosystem toxicity. Allowing contractors to use insulation without such hazardous chemicals can protect worker health and maintain fire safety on the jobsite.

I have read the study released by the California State Fire Marshal finding that the fire safety performance of below-grade polystyrene insulation is comparable whether or not flame retardants are present.<sup>1</sup> **This means that the addition of these harmful chemicals to below-grade insulation materials does not make worksites or people significantly safer from fire.** Moreover, the presence of these chemicals in polystyrene building insulation below-grade represents an unnecessary occupational exposure to toxic flame retardants for future demolition workers, who often don't have adequate personal protective equipment or information about chemicals or materials they are dismantling. The building code should not stand in the way of contractors who want to reduce exposure to hazardous chemicals on their worksites.

**I urge the California Building Standards Commission to approve the OSFM's proposed changes to Flammability Standards in Building Insulation Materials.**

Sincerely,

Ernest Pacheco  
District Environment Programs Coordinator  
Communications Workers of America, District 9  
(510) 677 8452  
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CC: Chief Dennis Mathisen, Office of the State Fire Marshal

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<sup>1</sup> Oklahoma State University, Flammability Standards for Building Insulation Materials, Final Report, August 2017 [bit.ly/OSURReport](https://bit.ly/OSURReport)