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To: CBSC@DGS; Sujeski, Crystal@CALFIRE
Subject: Public Comment 45-Day on SFM, Part 7, Sub-Item 4-8
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To the California Building Standards Commission,

I appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on the proposed amendments to Section 504.5 (Exterior Walls), included in the 45-Day Express Terms in SUB-ITEM 4-8. I am writing in support of retaining and highlighting the value of noncombustible materials in the construction of exterior walls. I have a degree in Design and Environmental Analysis from Cornell University, and I've been an owner/builder and green building advocate in Pacific Palisades for over 25 years. I'm currently rebuilding my home with noncombustible materials (ICCF blocks/concrete, steel and glass), and I'm leading a community effort for more homeowners to rebuild similarly (we now have about 50 homeowners who are participating). The cost to build my home is comparable to building with wood, and in addition to that, my future utility costs will be greatly reduced because of the increased R value of the insulated blocks. ICCF walls have a four hour fire rating, they perform six to seven times stronger than wood and steel frame construction in an earthquake, they have a 250 mph wind rating, and they don't get termites or mold because there's no cellulose in them.

Seeing the majority of homes being rebuilt with wood in Pacific Palisades, Altadena, Malibu and other fire ravaged areas has been very disheartening, and I think that the Office of the State Fire Marshall can and should make an effort to inform architects, designers, contractors and homeowners that there are options to rebuild with noncombustible materials that won't cost more. I've been participating in the online CWUI and Exterior Wall group meetings, and the vast majority of the focus has been on how to make wood structures more fire resilient. I think we need to take a step back and perhaps focus on how to transition from wood structures to noncombustible structures. A program needs to be set up to educate and train interested parties on the various noncombustible options to rebuild, and I'm hoping that this is something that the Office of the State Fire Marshal will consider doing. I'm aware that this is not a typical response to the various changes being proposed, but because of the increase in climate related events, we need to stop bringing combustible fuels into our towns and cities. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

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