

WHITE BLOCK CO. INC.

CONCRETE • PUMICE • BUILDING PRODUCTS
QUALITY MANUFACTURER SINCE 1947

September 14, 2012

Mr. Ray Allshouse, Chair
Washington State Building Code Council
PO Box 41449
Olympia, WA 98504-1449

Mr. Chairman and Council Members:

I am Bruce Corigliano, co-owner of White Block Co. and a Board member of the Northwest Concrete Masonry Association. White Block is a 3rd generation family business started in 1947. We are a manufacturer of concrete masonry units. We are located here in Spokane, and employ 18 people. I support the testimony offered by other masonry industry representatives today and recommend Option 2 be approved for the prescriptive R and U-value requirements of Tables C402.1.2 and C402.2. Option 1, in comparison, is too restrictive for mass walls and would not produce cost-effective designs for building owners. This outcome can be seen in independent retail building energy simulation work our industry has conducted along with an energy analysis performed by a regional tire manufacturer who constructs their stores throughout the northwest using concrete masonry units.

Furthermore, if you look at the real-world energy usage of many northwest building types you are likely to find that the exterior wall material does not have much impact on the total energy use. Requiring significant increases in the cost of mass wall insulation is simply not justified. This conclusion is reached without even considering the extra energy required to produce, ship and install the additional construction materials necessary to comply with overly restrictive code provisions.

Commercial building types using masonry (mass) wall assemblies are unique. The durability, fire-resistance, and low maintenance provided by concrete masonry is desired by many building owners. They know that concrete masonry is well suited for their purposes and has historically performed well in service. I believe the common use of integrally-insulated concrete masonry block should not be prohibited. This is one of the most sustainable construction methods available using a minimal amount of construction materials while serving multiple functions as the building structural support, wall finish, and building enclosure. Buildings constructed with these walls have an exceptionally long life as well.

The proposed changes of Option 1 to the masonry wall requirements would have a detrimental impact upon our industry without proper justification. More restrictive regulations would be especially harmful given the current state of our construction economy. The masonry industry consists of many small businesses operating in Washington State. The small business economic impact of these proposed commercial code changes must be fully considered to develop the correct code provisions for our northwest climate.

Thank you for your attention to my comments.

Sincerely,

Bruce B Corigliano President White Block Co Inc

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White Block Co.