Editor's Note: The following information is adapted from “The Outside In,” the newsletter of the Exterior Insulation Manufacturers Association.

The joint efforts by AWCI, EIMA and other groups to protect the status of exterior insulation and finish systems (EIFS) could not have come at a better time. BOCA, the Building Officials and Code Administrators International, SBCCI, the Standard Building Code Congress International, Inc., and ICBO, the International Building Code Conference, are all contemplating or have proposed changes in the building codes that affect EIFS systems.

BOCA Imposes New Regulations on the Use of EIFS; Industry Fights Back

On June 27, 1990, the BOCA membership adopted a proposed code change presented by the Portland Cement Association (PCA) that could have an impact on the business potential of EIFS applicators and distributors nationwide.

—The new regulation establishes property line setback requirements based on the ignition characteristics of EIFS due to radiant heat transfer.
—No restrictions would apply to any EIFS which meets or exceed the most stringent criteria as outlined by the code change.
—No acceptable method of testing the ignitability of EIFS currently exists and, therefore, compliance criteria must be established.
—The Exterior Insulation Manufacturers Association (EIMA) is confident that the systems they provide will be able to meet the new requirements being set forth in the BOCA National Building Code.
—EIMA is presently involved in a radiant heat research project, the objective of which is to establish a radiant heat test method.
—EIMA is working directly with the BOCA Research and Evaluation Committee to establish compliance criteria by the end of 1990.

For more information and a brochure on EIMA’s radiant heat research program, contact EIMA, 30 Holley Street, Wakefield, RI 02879-3309.

SBCCI Code Revision Committee Recommends Disapproval of Code Changes Restricting the Use of EIFS

The SBCCI (Standard Building Code Congress International, Inc.) Building Code Revision Committee met during the SBCCI Mid-Year Hearings in Birmingham, Alabama, on July 11, 1990, to consider a proposal by the Portland Cement Association (PCA), supported by other competing interests, to establish stringent ignitability limits for EIFS within the SBCCI jurisdiction.

The Building Code Revision Committee voted 7-1 to recommend to the general membership disapproval of code changes B123-90, B130-90, and B135-90.

The committee’s recommendation will be considered by the SBCCI general membership at the SBCCI annual meeting, to be held October 1-5, 1990, in New Orleans, Louisiana. At this meeting the general membership will have the opportunity to sustain or overturn the Code Revision Committee’s recommendation. In addition, members not in attendance at the annual meeting in New Orleans will have the same opportunity by mail ballot.

As was the case with the code change approved by the BOCA membership in June 1990, the basic concern of the building code bodies relates to the potential of fire to spread from one burning building to an EIFS clad building as a result of radiant heat transfer and subsequent ignition of the EIFS cladding.

The SBCCI proposed code changes are much more restrictive in nature than the BOCA change because the performance criteria have been increased threefold.

Since the PCA’s proposed code changes are unjustified and unwarranted, the Building Code Revision Committee voted 7-1 to recommend disapproval. However, the SBCCI general membership have the final authority, and they will cast their ballots at the code hearings in New Orleans.

ICBO Will Consider Proposed Code Changes

It is extremely important that the entire industry—EIFS distributors, applicators, specifiers, and other interested parties—become active in defending EIFS in the building codes. Proposed code changes to the Uniform Building Code that restrict the use of EIFS by limiting building heights and increasing property setbacks will be heard at the International Congress of Building Code Officials annual meeting, September 9-14, 1990, in Denver. For additional information, contact the technical department of AWCI at (703) 684-2924 or EIMA at (401) 462-3687.