

editor's note



MY KIDS HAVE A NEAT TRICK WHEN THEY WANT SOMETHING AND THEIR MOM SAYS NO: THEY COME AND ASK ME, HOPING I'LL GIVE A DIFFERENT ANSWER (AND IF YOU'RE A PARENT, I KNOW YOU'VE EXPERIENCED THE SAME PHENOMENON).

While this type of behavior is more-or-less expected in children, I'm more surprised when professional organizations try to pull the same end-run. But that seems to be the exact tack the Portland Cement Association has chosen to try. In this case, they're trying to increase the use of concrete construction by mucking with building codes and design loads. According to an article in the September 2 issue of *Engineering News Record*, "Concern is growing over a recently released 'sample' ordinance for high-performance buildings from the Portland Cement Association."

This sample ordinance is apparently designed to amend the *International Building Code* and "was developed outside the standard consensus process and is biased toward concrete." The article notes that many national standard-setting organizations are concerned about this effort; for example the American Institute of Architects does not support "wholesale changes to scope and requirements of the IBC outside of the established consensus process." Likewise, the Building Owners and Managers Association (BOMA) stated they do not support PCA's document and also called it "biased."

According to ENR's analysis, the PCA document would increase design wind pressure and design force by 20% for most buildings. Further, flood resistance is increased to at least 3 ft above flood elevation and no consideration

is given for dams, levees, and other flood protection. In a slap at the wood industry, the document requires non-combustible framing for all multifamily housing.

And in a display of unparalleled chutzpah, Stephen Szoke, PCA's director of codes and standards, stated to ENR: "We did not try to promote specific materials." I guess he never looked at his own website, which states: "Since its founding in 1916, the Portland Cement Association has had the same mission: 'Improve and expand the uses of Portland cement and concrete.'"

As AISC Vice President and Chief Structural Engineer Charles J. Carter, S.E., P.E., Ph.D., states: "This looks like part of PCA's continued effort to spin a cement industry wish list that represents many failed code change proposals. AISC fully supports the use of consensus procedures for the development of codes and specifications. In fact, all of AISC's specifications are developed through an ANSI-accredited consensus process."

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