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201 NORTH FIGUEROA STREET
LOS ANGELES, CA 90012

OSAMA YOUNAN, P.E.
GENERAL MANAGER
SUPERINTENDENT OF BUILDING

JOHN WEIGHT
EXECUTIVE OFFICER

March 25, 2025

Honorable Members of the City Council
City of Los Angeles City Hall, Room 395
Los Angeles, CA 90012

REPORT FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF BUILDING AND SAFETY RELATED TO RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DEVELOPING A FRAMEWORK THAT SETS LIMITS ON THE EMBODIED CARBON OF NEW CONSTRUCTION AND MAJOR RENOVATIONS; CF 23-1391

Dear Honorable Councilmembers,

On April 9, 2024, the Los Angeles City Council adopted a motion (Ramen/Yaroslavsky, CF-23-1391) to address the need to regulate embodied carbon resulting from building construction. The motion instructed the Department of Building and Safety (DBS) to provide recommendations for updating the Los Angeles Green Building Code to create a framework that sets limits on the embodied carbon allowed for new construction and major additions to buildings larger than 50,000 square feet; require less carbon-intensive building materials for new construction projects and major additions to buildings in the City that are smaller than 50,000 square feet; and incentivize the reduction of construction waste through re-use of building materials.

The California Green Building Standards Code (CALGreen) already establishes minimum sustainability requirements for residential and commercial construction projects. CALGreen has also already developed an Embodied Carbon Supplement that applies to large non-residential buildings and schools. As of July 1 2024, non-residential buildings greater than 100k must comply with one of three embodied carbon pathways (i.e., Building Reuse, Life Cycle Analysis, Prescriptive Path). Each embodied carbon pathway requires a base level of performance (Mandatory) and also provides optional performance tiers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Since the California Green Building Standards Code (CALGreen) has established pathways for embodied carbon, the DBS has the following recommendations should the City move forward with a local ordinance aimed at embodied carbon reduction:

1. Leverage CALGreen's Embodied Carbon Pathway framework to develop a local building ordinance that will establish limits on embodied carbon for new construction and major additions.

2. The City may lower the area threshold that triggers compliance with the embodied carbon requirements of the Code.
3. The City may adopt CALGreen's Tier 1 and Tier 2 for various types of buildings or projects.

Should you have any questions, please contact Devin Myrick at 213-482-0447 or by email at Devin.Myrick@lacity.org.

Respectfully,



Osama Younan, General Manager
Department of Building and Safety