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**Advocacy Digest | October 26, 2023**

**Brad Boycks, Executive Director**

**JCRAR Votes to “Indefinitely Suspend” Update to Commercial Building Code**

Recently, the Joint Committee for the Review of Administrative Rules (JCRAR) voted to “indefinitely suspend” the update to the commercial building code. This means that the Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS) may not proceed with any provision in the code update unless they are expressly allowed to do so through enactment of new legislation.

Our main objection to the proposed code update was moving to the 2021 energy code for all commercial buildings including multifamily buildings. The additional cost to construct new commercial buildings under this code change would dramatically increase the cost of housing during a time of record high inflation and an already scarce supply of all housing, especially workforce housing.

WBA has already started meeting with the DSPS Secretary Dan Hereth about constructing a comparison of the current code and the proposed changes to see if common ground can be found to eventually update the commercial building code.

**Court of Appeals Rejects Lawsuit on Bird Safe Glass**

WBA, along with several other construction and real estate groups, sued the City of Madison after they passed an ordinance requiring bird safe glass on commercial buildings of a certain height. Our lawsuit objected to the ordinance because we felt it was in violation of the statewide unform commercial building code.

Recently the Wisconsin Court of Appeals upheld a 2022 Dane County Circuit Court Judges decision on the matter. The only other next option would be to appeal the Court of Appeals Decision to the Wisconsin Supreme Court.

All of the groups involved in the lawsuit are now discussing the pros and cons of appealing the decision to the Wisconsin Supreme Court and will likely make a decision on the appeal soon.

**Bill Introduced to Provide Additional Funds for Manufacturing and Construction Education**

A bill was recently authored by Representative Chance Green (R-Grand View) and Senator Rob Stafsholt (R-New Richmond) and was circulated for other members of the legislature to sign on as a co-author. Thank you to the WBA members that responded to our recent VoterVoice request to contact your member of the legislature in support of the bill.

The legislation, now Assembly Bill 550 (AB 550) will:

* + Add construction along with manufacturing equipment to the list of eligible equipment that schools can receive dollars to acquire.
  + An applicant that is awarded a grant under this section shall use the grant moneys awarded for the enhancement or improvement of a technical education facility or for the acquisition of equipment that is used in advanced manufacturing or construction fields in the workplace, together with any software necessary for the operation of that equipment and any instructional material necessary to train pupils in the operation of that equipment.”
  + Increase the maximum grant that can be received by a school or multiple schools working together from $50,000 to $100,000.

WBA has registered in support of AB 550 and will engage with legislators on the matter as the bill moves through the legislative process this session.