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NFPA Standards Council Sides with EIMA on 285 Test

Falls Church, Va., September 5, 2017— The EIFS Industry Members Association (EIMA) is pleased to announce the successful appeal to overturn revisions to add mandatory vertical and horizontal joints to NFPA 285 - the multi-story fire test for exterior walls.

“Our position has always been about the health and safety of the building, and making sure the test being used appropriately reflects what’s being built in the field” said Dave Johnston, executive director for EIMA. “We commend the position of the NFPA Standards Council that clearly shows fire safety should guide these tests.”

On June 7, the NFPA membership voted in favor of a revision during the NFPA Technical Meeting that would effectively change the multi-story fire test for exterior walls. The proposed amendment would have required a new configuration for the test that included a new joint (horizontal) about 4 feet above the window opening with another joint extending perpendicular from that joint upward. It is the belief of EIMA and others that this would have created a less stringent test and one that would not have appropriately reflected what was being built in the field. As a result, EIMA appealed the decision to revise NFPA 285 and successfully argued its case in front of the NFPA Standards Council at its hearing in Quincy, MA on August 15.

“An objective of the NFPA 285 test should be to evaluate the worst-case condition of a fire in a building. When original research was being conducted in the 1980’s to determine how EIFS should be tested, it was determined that the worst-case condition were walls without horizontal joints because it would expose the entire undivided mass of the expanded polystyrene (EPS) within the EIFS fire exposure” said Terry Vines of Sto Corp, during his testimony to the NFPA Standards Council.

Founded in 1981, the EIFS Industry Members Association (EIMA) is a national non-profit technical trade association comprised of leading manufacturers, suppliers, distributors and applicators involved in the exterior insulation and finish systems (EIFS) industry. For additional information please visit www.EIMA.com.