



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA LETTER

Agenda Number:

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2240

Submitted on:
(COB Stamp)

Department Name: Planning and Development
Department No.: 053
Agenda Date: November 4, 2025
Placement: Departmental Agenda
Estimated Time: 15 MINUTES
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Department Director: Lisa Plowman 
Contact: Craig Johnson, Building Official
SUBJECT: Adoption of 2025 California Building Standards Codes with Local Amendments to Chapter 10 of the Santa Barbara County Code; Building Regulations

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence:

As to form: N/A

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: N/A

Recommended Actions:

That the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Approve the introduction (first reading) of an Ordinance (Attachment A) amending Chapter 10 of the Santa Barbara County Code, titled Building Regulations, adopting the 2025 California Building Standards Codes with local amendments;
- b) Read the title of the Ordinance and waive full reading of the Ordinance;
- c) Continue the hearing to the Administrative Agenda of November 18, 2025 to:
 - i) Adopt the Ordinance (second reading) amending Chapter 10 of the Santa Barbara County Code, titled Building Regulations, adopting the 2025 California Building Standards Codes with local amendments;
 - ii) Adopt a Resolution of Legislative Findings Supporting Amendments to the California Building Standards Codes (Attachment E); and
 - iii) Determine that this ordinance amendment is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Section 15061(b)(3), because there is no possibility that the action in question may have a significant effect on the environment (Attachment C).

Summary Text:

This Board item recommends ordinance amendments to Chapter 10, of the Santa Barbara County Code, Building Code, to update provisions to comply with the 2025 California Building Standards Code, and incorporate local amendments for Board consideration.

Background:

The California Building Standards Commission (CBSC) is an independent commission within the State and Consumer Services Agency responsible for reviewing, adopting, and publishing building standards for the State of California. Every three years, the CBSC adopts a compilation of building regulations referred to as the California Building Standards Code (California Code of Regulations Title 24). Included in these regulations are provisions of the California Building, Plumbing, Mechanical, Electrical, Residential, Green Building, Historical Building and Existing Building Codes. Through the code adoption process, the CBSC selects and approves a model code. Local governments or jurisdictions can then modify the code to add more restrictive provisions based on their specific local geologic, climatic and topographic conditions. The administrative provisions of the code can be modified without specific justification. The 2025 California Codes were published on July 1, 2025, and will become effective on January 1, 2026. The County's local amendments will become effective on January 1, 2026. Projects submitted for a permit on or after January 1, 2026, must be designed to the 2025 edition of the California Building Standards Code as adopted and amended by Chapter 10.

Discussion:

2025 California Building and Standards Codes Adoption

The 2025 California Building Standards Codes adds Part 7, California Wildland-Urban Interface Code. The California Wildland-Urban Interface Code combines previous segments of the code related to the wildland urban interface into a single code. This code addresses the designation of wildland-urban interface areas, construction regulations for those areas, and fire protection requirements. This Code will be adopted by reference in Chapter 10 as Article XIX with combined amendments for building regulations and fire protection and prevention.

Prior administrative amendments to the California Building Standards Codes are being carried forward. In addition, amendments that address local topographic and climatic conditions which create fire hazards, high wind and seismicity are being carried forward from current local amendments.

Fire Hazard Amendments:

- The amendments to Chapter 10, Article II, Part 2, Sections 102.2.2 D, require automatic residential fire sprinkler systems to be installed in new manufactured housing not in a mobile home park.
- The amendments to Chapter 10, Article XIX, Section 19-2.A, provide requirements and exceptions for new buildings, additions, and alterations for structures located in Fire Hazard Severity and Wildland-Urban Interface areas.
- The Amendments to Chapter 10, Article XIX, Sections 19-2.B to D provide additional definitions to The Wildland-Urban Interface Code, fuel management requirements for fire prevention and protection.
- The amendments to Chapter 10, Article XIX, Section 19-2.E provide requirements for the Santa Barbara County Fire Hazard Abatement.

High Wind Amendments:

- The amendments to Chapter 10, Article II, Part 1, Sections 10-2.1.2 G, and Article II, Part 2, 10-2.2.2 B of the ordinance are necessary due to the high wind condition in certain regions within the County.

High Seismicity Amendments:

- The amendment to Article II, Part 1, Section 10.2.1.2 H to limit exemptions from required special inspections for concrete footings when the design strength of concrete exceeds a certain level. Providing special inspection ensures the concrete is placed properly and performs as expected under earthquake loadings.
- The amendments to Article II, Part 2, Section 10.2.2.2 I, require minimum steel reinforcement in walls and in footings. The prescribed minimum reinforcements provide a basic level of safety and strength for foundations to span local soil failures during an earthquake.
- The amendment to Article II, Part 2, Section 10.2.2.2. J and K, disallows Gypsum board and Portland Cement plaster as earthquake resisting elements in non-engineered single family dwellings due to poor performance of these materials in past earthquakes.
- The amendment to Article II, Part 2, Section 10.2.2.2 L and M modifies certain prescriptive construction details to provide complete seismic load path in buildings constructed without structural engineering.

Proposed New Amendments:

- Amend the 2025 California Building Code by adding a section (Section 10-1.6.2, adding Section 105.2.3 Emergency Permits) to provide for the Building Official to authorize work in an emergency situation to secure a structure to ensure immediate health, life, and safety conditions are met.
- Revise Article XI Primary Housing Code and Article XII of Chapter 10 to remove references to the 1997 Uniform Housing Code and the 1997 Abatement of Dangerous Building Code, and then adopt by reference, as amended, the 2024 International Property Maintenance Code. The 2024 International Property Maintenance Code will serve as the County's Primary Housing Code and Primary Dangerous Buildings Code.

Fiscal Analysis:

The costs associated with the update of Chapter 10 and the preparation of this report are funded through existing staff time under salaries and benefits, which are included in the Adopted FY 2025-26 Permitting Budget in the Planning and Development department. No additional appropriations are required. There are no fiscal impacts.

Special Instructions:

P&D will fulfill noticing requirements.

The Clerk of the Board shall copies of the Minute Order and signed Ordinances to the Planning and Development Department, attention David Villalobos.

Attachments:

Attachment A – Chapter 10 Building Regulations Ordinance Amendment for adoption (Case No. 25ORD-00012)

Attachment B – Chapter 10 Building Regulations Ordinance Amendment, underline and strikeout (Case No. 25ORD-00012)

Attachment C – CEQA Notice of Exemption

Attachment D – Regional Seismic Conditions by Earth System Pacific, dated December 1, 2011

Attachment E – Resolution of Legislative Findings Supporting Amendments to the California Building Standards Codes

Contact Information:

Craig Johnson,
Building Official

johnsonc@countyofsb.org