

Asbestos

Protecting Communities and Tenants in a Sound and Economical Manner

BACKGROUND

The inhalation of asbestos fibers can cause serious illnesses, including malignant mesothelioma. Since the mid 1980s, many uses of asbestos have been banned.

California presently has some of the strictest standards in the country. However, some advocacy groups have advocated for even stricter regulations of asbestos in public and commercial buildings.

In addition, the issue of naturally occurring asbestos and its potential health impacts has also gained in attention. Health risks associated with exposure to naturally occurring deposits of asbestos not yet understood, and current US federal regulations do not address exposure. Many populated areas are in proximity to shallow, natural deposits which occur in 50 of 58 California counties and in 19 other U.S. states.

Unfortunately, no-growth advocates are utilizing this issue to stop needed infrastructure, residential and commercial projects.

CBPA POSITION

CBPA recognizes that exposure to asbestos is a severe health hazard and encourages all of its members to strictly adhere to federal, state, and local guidelines regulating the substance.

Commonly accepted and scientifically based standards need to be established setting forth the level of exposure necessary to create significant health problems.

Standards and public information are needed so the commercial real estate industry may make an informed decision on whether to abate existing asbestos, encapsulate existing asbestos, or leave it alone.

As it relates to indoor-asbestos, CBPA supports research and dissemination of all available information which informs the public of the recognized fact that asbestos creates a potential health problem only when the asbestos is in a friable condition (loose and flaking) or is in a location in which the asbestos would be constantly disturbed.

CBPA strongly supports the dissemination of information which makes clear that asbestos in commercial buildings can be safely managed and does not create a potential health risk for workers, and that generally asbestos is not a health risk except when it has been disturbed and is airborne.

As it relates to naturally-occurring asbestos, CBPA supports state funding to map areas of California that contain naturally-occurring asbestos and to provide local governments with this information. Local officials should have access to the most up-to-date information on such important environmental and public health issue.