



**SPUR**

San Francisco | San Jose

September 9, 2013

San Francisco Board of Supervisors  
Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place  
San Francisco, CA 94102-4689

Dear Supervisors,

**SPUR supports the repeal and replacement of the current local Fire Code with an amended 2013 San Francisco Fire Code that allows an exception to the existing air replenishment system requirement. Pursuant to Section 511.2 (local standards for high-rise buildings and tunnels) subject buildings that are equipped with a fire service access elevator in accordance with California Building Code section 3007 will no longer be required to install an air replenishment system.**

This amendment reflects the expressed preferences of public safety personnel including the Fire Commission, which adopted a proposal earlier this year to allow project sponsors a choice between a firefighters' elevator and using the Rescue Air system (FARS). While the FARS system may provide an additional means of delivering air, the Fire Department prefers developers to include a reinforced firefighters' elevator to shuttle their vital supplies in new high-rise buildings.

This amendment is consistent with the California State Fire Code, which does not recognize FARS technology, but requires a reinforced Fire Service Access Elevator in all high-rise buildings. Such an elevator can operate safely during an event to rapidly move firefighters and oxygen canisters up and down a building. The San Francisco Fire Department believes allowing these elevators as an alternate means and method to the Firefighter Air Replenishment System is satisfactory.

The FARS system can significantly increase the cost of new construction in high-rise projects with negligible if any increases in public or firefighter safety. The City of San Jose, the only other major jurisdiction in the country to require FARS in high-rise buildings, recently took the same step of amending their code to allow either system to be employed in high-rise buildings, consistent with state Fire Code.

We strongly encourage you to support the passage of the amended 2013 San Francisco Fire Code.

Sincerely,

Gabriel Metcalf  
Executive Director

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