

July 13, 2015

Honorable Tom Bates, Mayor  
City of Berkeley  
2180 Milvia Street 5th Floor  
Berkeley, CA 94704

**RE: Professional Association Offer and Comments  
on Proposed Balcony Ordinances**

Dear Mayor Bates:

On behalf of the undersigned professional associations, we offer our sincere sympathies to the families of those who lost their lives in the recent balcony collapse on Kittredge Street. Further, our thoughts are with those who were injured and their families. As a debt owed to all those affected, as well as residents of the City of Berkeley and beyond, we urge systematic consideration of any necessary improvements to design, construction and inspection practices, based on a determination of causes.

To this end, we would like to volunteer to the City of Berkeley the coordinated technical and building code expertise of our respective associations; in collaboration with the City of Berkeley, we offer to form or participate in a multi-disciplinary task force with representatives from each of our organizations, together with additional representatives identified by the City. This task force would develop, for consideration by the City of Berkeley, proposals for improvement based on 1) detailed consideration of available information on the causes of the incident, 2) recommendations put forward by the City of Berkeley Planning and Development Department in their memorandum of June 23, 2015, and 3) comments brought forth by both members of our respective associations and the larger community. A task force, if established, would provide a structure through which all interest persons in our organizations and the larger community could have an opportunity to present their thoughts, recommendations, and concerns. It would also provide an opportunity for detailed consideration of the technical merits of resulting task force proposals.

We believe that a multidisciplinary approach is needed to help ensure that any proposals stemming from the tragedy will reliably improve the performance of balconies, decks, and other appurtenances. Members of our organizations have identified issues within the June 23, 2015 recommendations that would benefit from an expert collaboration that works through the full range of structural, waterproofing, fire resistive, sustainability and inspection considerations.

We further offer to assist in efforts to develop clear guidelines for the proposed inspection program, and to help educate and inform designers and builders as to the intent and implementation of any new ordinances and programs.

We look forward to working together with the City toward reliable implementation of safer structures.

Sincerely,



Ryan Kersting, SE  
President  
Structural Engineers Association of California



Kelly Cobeen, SE  
President-Elect  
Structural Engineers Association of California



Katharine Stillwell, SE  
Structural Engineers Association of Northern California



Perry Haviland, FAIA  
American Institute of Architects, East Bay



Mark Soltes, CBO, CASp  
President  
East Bay Chapter International Code Council

cc. Members, Berkeley City Council  
Mr. Eric Angstadt, Director, Planning and Development Department  
Mr. Alex Roshal, Manager, Building and Safety