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# CWUI WORK GROUP

## Meeting Minutes – January 7, 2026

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#### Contacts:

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#### I. CALL TO ORDER AT 1:07 PM

- A. Welcome – Crystal Sujeski
- B. Introductions – Crystal Sujeski and Mitchel Baker
- C. Agenda Review – (Bob Raymer/Daniel Gorham-Motioned/Approved)

#### II. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Charter –
  - 1. Crystal Sujeski reads out the [CWUI Charter](#)
- B. CWUI - Emergency Regulation Update
  - 1. Crystal Sujeski shows where to find Part 7 on the [Building Standards Commission website](#). It can be found under the 2025 Triennial Edition at Part 7 – California Wildland-Urban Interface Code, that link goes to the International Code Council (ICC) code. In the ICC code: red is a California amendment, green is an emergency regulation, and black is model code. More information about the emergency regulations can be found on the website under the [October 15 meeting](#), where the initial express terms and the finding of emergency can be found.
  - 2. Crystal Sujeski goes over the initial express terms, highlighting that Health & Safety code 13108.5 charged the State Fire Marshal with expanding the regulations for building construction in the wildland to the Local Responsibility Areas (LRA) designated high severity zones. The maps were not completed by the February Commission meeting; they were completed in March and rolled out throughout the year where they were adopted by LRAs. The State provided the recommended designations, but LRAs may have expanded on these designations and been more restrictive than the State recommended. To be precise, Crystal Sujeski recommends looking at the local maps instead of the state ones. She mentions there were some language changes and changes to the scope section, including a definition of home hardening. Crystal then says that a mistake was printed where 2-inch nominal dimensional lumber was allowed in the protection of open eaves, that mistake has been corrected. The final change mentioned is a change to the January 1, 2008 trigger date has been removed, as well as the exceptions for remodels and additions. So, if you are doing a remodel or addition in a designated area, then the regulations apply.
- C. Steve Hawks – Burn Demo presentation (Cancelled)

### III. NEW BUSINESS

#### A. Timeline – Updates

1. Crystal Sujeski thanks the committee for their work in the pre-cycle activities for the 2025 code cycle, and now the process moves to the 2025 intervening code adoption cycle review.
2. Crystal Sujeski then shows the [timeline](#) for the package. On December 1<sup>st</sup> CWUI submitted packages to California Building Standards Commission (CBSC) based on work group recommendations that were approved by Chief Berlant. The packages are going through ADA compliance review, then the Code Advisory Committee (CAC) meetings will take place where recommendations are made by those members. State agencies will then respond to those recommendations, after which there will be a public comment period. Those comments will be received by CWUI and there may be another public comment period after the initial period. Then there is the final commission meeting for adoption, approval, and filing with Secretary of State. After the publication, there are 180 days until the effective date.
3. Kevin Reinerston asks when the emergency regulations will be on the ICC's website, Crystal Sujeski answers that it will be early January. Timothy Freeman confirms that the code is currently being sent with the errata and the website will be updated after the physical copies are received.
4. Milad Shabanian asks when a proposal that one of the work groups worked on will be approved. Crystal Sujeski says the goal is to get that on the website, but they only want one official document published that has gone through executive approval. The CBSC will have the official copy of all the proposals approved by Chief Berlant. The proposal will be posted soon, at least 15 days before the February 17 meeting. This timeline is confirmed by Timothy Freeman.

#### B. Samer Abdelshahid – Presentation - Fire Curtains / “Rain on Demand”

1. Samer Abdelshahid [presents](#):
  - i. Samer Abdelshahid starts by telling an anecdote about a woman who had to evacuate her home at 2:15 in the morning in less than 12 minutes and when she got back the house had burned down. This story highlights the 20-minute gap it takes for firefighters to arrive at the scene that he hopes to address.
  - ii. The first element of the system consists of three different layers of sensors that surround the home in different directions at 100 feet, 50 feet, and 10 feet. Each zone has thermal or heat sensors that are placed strategically around the home. The 100 feet zone will utilize technology for long range low power that will wake the system up when it senses a fire. If heat crosses the 50 feet line, then the system runs on full power. Then the 10-foot zone is the final shield, so by the time the fire reaches that point the ground is already wet. The goal is to play offensive not defensive.
  - iii. Samer Abdelshahid shows element 2 of the system, stating that the sprinklers are a fully ground based system rather than being placed on the house itself, using steel risers to create a hydraulic curtain that shoots up over the home and falls around it. Samer Abdelshahid then shows element 3 of the system, saying the water is held in a 2,500-gallon reservoir tank, enough water for 40 minutes of fire protection. Element 4 is a high-pressure fire pump powered by gas that generates 61 psi.
  - iv. Website: <https://firecurtainprotect.com>

2. Marjan Hazegh asks how high-speed wind affects the function of the curtains. Samer Abdelshahid answers that this was tested on, and the difference is these curtains can go up to 61 psi as compared to other fire curtains that use mist.
3. Greg Anderson asks about the diagram showing 10-foot risers for the sprinkler heads and if the sprinklers can go in between track housing that have much smaller gaps. Samer Abdelshahid answers that the sprinklers can be put wherever and that it's scalable depending on what the building looks like. Greg Anderson mentions that mounted at that height, these curtains would be obvious in track house and asks if that's the plan. Samer Abdelshahid confirms that it is.
4. Milad Shabanian asks if there is a possibility of water intrusion onto the building envelope. Samer Abdelshahid states that the sprinklers do not aim at the house, rather they aim above the house, so it acts more like rain. Milad Shabanian mentions that he asked this question because the photo in slide 6 shows water getting into the under-floor areas.
5. Milad Shabanian then asks if it works like rain, then how can it protect against embers intruding through the vents because it's making the house moist top to bottom which isn't impacting the covered or under eave areas. How does this protect against ember intrusion through the building envelope? Samer Abdelshahid says that the water is aimed above the roof to fall down covering all sides of the building, so embers don't have a chance to pass through the water. He also says that in many cases they can install two nose hydraulic sprinklers covering a circle around the building and the fence at the same time. He once again mentions the customizability of the system.
6. Milad Shabanian finally asks if the sensors catch the heat or the ember activity. Samer Abdelshahid answers that there are two sensors. One is a thermal monitor that watches the fire approaching from long range and once it sees a fire the whole system is put in a stand-up stage. The other range of sensors is made up of both heat and thermal sensors, and when two of them activate at the same time, the whole system triggers. He then references the zones in slide 5, stating that the system can be triggered starting from any zone. Milad Shabanian follows up by asking if these sensors will be installed within the property lines. Samer Abdelshahid answers that the sensors can be located anywhere on the property.
7. Crystal Sujeski states that there are several companies and organizations that promote exterior sprinklers as a mitigation option, but the biggest hurdle to date has been the lack of a standard from a code development point of view. She then mentions Aaron Murg's comment in the chat asking about a video showing the testing. CWUI is open to innovation and new technologies, but specific test results are needed, and the committee is hoping that manufacturers will be transparent when CWUI and CDA are looking at implementing regulations. Larry Williams shares an Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety (IBHS) [document](#) regarding external sprinklers as a form of wildfire mitigation.
8. Aaron Murg asks if there is a video showing the testing as that would answer many of the questions the members of CWUI have. Milad Shabanian says there is and that he will share his email to members who want to learn more about the system. He then states that this technology has been patented for 2 years. Crystal Sujeski confirms that this information will be linked as a reference and that people who are interested will reach out.

9. Bob Raymer agrees with the question previously raised about water pressure and the point that Crystal Sujeski made about what the committee will want to know about, specifying cost and standardization. Samer Abdelshahid confirms that he has a visibility study and mentions that the pump for the water is a gas pump, not electrical so there is no worry about electrical failure during fires, and it increases up to 61 psi. Bob Raymer mentions that small water purveyors have been charging 10s of thousands of dollars to hook up to a new home that has sprinklers, which is all new homes, which has been an ongoing issue. That issue needs to be worked on before CWUI will do anything that's going to increase water pressure, at least during times of emergency.
10. Greg Andersen confirms that there are a lot of manufacturers that are all a little different and there is no standard for how they work. He also mentions that an actual fire depends on so many variables. He agrees with Bob Raymer's point, stating that there are 10,000 water purveyors in California, and that this is a varied problem and there is no standard for testing. Going forward, this will take a big lift to show that these systems work and what the standards should be. Samer Abdelshahid agrees with Greg Anderson and mentions that the water is covered in a separate 500 gallon tank, which is enough for 40 minutes, which will cover the 20 minute gap it takes for firefighters to arrive on scene.

C. Sub-Groups –

1. AB 2322 CH7A ASCE 7 Sub-Group – [Paul Armstrong](#) and [Sunup Mathew](#)
  - i. No report
  - ii. If people are interested in joining, email [Paul Armstrong](#), the meetings are planned to start in the next month.
2. Scope – [Robert Raymer](#)
  - i. The scope sub-group previously asked the work group to look at the two application sections, the one titled application that was 101.3.1 and the one that followed right after which was application date and where required to look for at least three things to report on. Did you find any language that was redundant, confusing, or conflicting, and in a perfect world how would you propose to deal with this? The sub-group received numerous responses, a lot of it duplicative. A list was created and sent back to the full committee, with one item becoming controversial and wasn't going to be resolved, but the emergency regulations that were adopted addressed all the others. Bob Raymer highlights two sections on application that were merged effectively and general consolidation, particularly for State Responsibility Areas (SRA) stating that if you are an SRA, you need to comply. One of the exceptions previously pointed out by Crystal Sujeski, exception 5, that dealt with additions and alterations conflicted with language that is in section 101.5, that was removed. All the references to January 2008, July 2008, etc. were found to be confusing, so those references were also removed. There is now one easy to understand section 101.3.1 application. Bob Raymer also brings up that Crystal Sujeski made the additions required by SB63. The only question left was whether the application section is in the right part of the code, that issue was not resolved, but the emergency regulations addressed every other concern. Crystal Sujeski then shows the documents previously submitted by the sub-group (view recording for the documents), Bob Raymer confirms that red is his comments and yellow highlights are locations where there was a specific note.

- ii. Milad Shabanian says that his sub-group sent over a document suggestion that the scopes subgroup consider deleting the exceptions for the scope section and is asking for confirmation that the recommendation was received. Bob Raymer doesn't recall getting that email, but states that the exceptions under the application date and where required have been deleted. The exceptions under the initial application section 101.3.1 have been transferred over to the updated section 101.3.1 and they've been clarified. Crystal Sujeski mentions that Milad Shabanian had done some coordination with accessory buildings in Group U that Chief Berlant did want to incorporate. As soon as they're posted with CBSC, everyone will have the opportunity with CAC to submit comments.
- iii. Marjan Hazegh asks if the matrix will be updated to include Section 115 as an adopted section. Crystal confirms it will be and mentions that this was something that one of the commissioners brought up during the emergency hearing, the recording for the October 15<sup>th</sup> meeting can be found on the CBSC website.
- iv. Larry Williams says that one of the things his sub-group has been working on since October relates to scoping and applicability, specifically LRA high and moderate zones. The sub-group worked on some stuff that was sent to the state fire marshals, but failed to make it to Bob Raymer, Larry Williams will get that to the scope sub-group.
- v. Bob Raymer mentions that part of the work group thought that it might be a good idea to have the scope/application section in front of the building code provisions, it used to be in 7A in front of the fire safe development and in front of the defensible space items. This was the controversial item that couldn't reach consensus. Bob Raymer mentions that the CBSC took care of the Chapter 5 issue that the sub-group didn't find, under general and special building and construction. There was also a reference to additions and alterations originally constructed prior to July 1, 2008, which also conflicted with 101.5. These issues were taken care of by the commission and the fire marshal supported it.

3. Roofing – [Helene Hardy Pierce](#)
  - i. No report
  - ii. Planning to start in February after the language is posted, email [Helene Hardy Pierce](#) to join the subgroup.
4. Accessory Buildings – [Milad Shabanian](#)
  - i. No report
  - ii. Email [Milad Shabanian](#) if you want to join the subgroup.
5. Weathering / Ignition-Resistant Materials – [Marcelo Hirschler](#)
  - i. Not present
6. Vents – [Kevin Scott](#)
  - i. Crystal Sujeski states that there is a continuing conversation about the installation of horizontal and vertical vents as the committee works with Building Materials Listing (BML).
  - ii. Kelly Barkompas states that BML differentiates between horizontal, vertical, or both, but the WUI products handbook does not distinguish between horizontal and vertical vents, which is inaccurate. Kelly Barkompas would like the CWUI group to get the horizontal orientation added to the workbook. Crystal Sujeski

says that the BML program reached out about the issues and will be contacting the sub-group as well.

- iii. Crystal Sujeski says the sup group has proposals going through ICC code hearings as well. Slate Bryer mentions that this was at American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM), and the proposal did not pass through ASTM, although there was a change to ASTM 286 indirectly through 2912 which governs the flame exposure. Slate Bryer reached out the ASTM to figure out when this goes into effect and if the change automatically happens.

7. Chapter 6 – [Larry Williams](#)

- i. Larry Williams once again mentions the document that this subgroup will send over to Bob Raymer. This document covers applicability and the definition of WUI with the new maps issued. Currently, the definition of WUI applies everywhere in the SRA and to all 3 zones in the LRA which was not intended.
- ii. Will be incorporating Chapter 4 into the subgroup going forward
- iii. Crystal Sujeski mentions that two code interpretations requests regarding the applicability of part 7, which are being answered and will hopefully be approved for the intervening cycle. Chief Berlant has approved a modified definition for wildland urban interface areas, which are going through building standards and will be posted sooner rather than later. An information bulletin is also going through the approval process addressing the emergency regulations, introducing the effective date of the 2025 addition to Title 24 and giving an overview of the pieces that have been incorporated. Both of those will go through an internal executive review process before being posted. Crystal Sujeski states that this documentation should help clear up some of the concerns.
- iv. Larry Williams brings up that currently no one is working on Chapter 2 definitions and that he is willing to add that chapter to this subgroup. This subgroup will now cover chapters 2, 4, and 6.

8. Windows/Frames – [Daniel Gorham/Greg Andersen](#)

- i. Correction to the subgroup title, will be called windows/doors going forward
- ii. The sub-group met twice since the last CWUI meeting in October and came up with 6 working items for the intervening cycle. Daniel Gorham says that in terms of windows and doors as a potential pathway for fire spread there is a lot of active research and the aim of this sub-group is to develop recommendations for code language. The 6 working items are:
  - a. Section 504.8 exterior glazing – currently only talks about the glazing portion but the sub-group recognizes the need to consider the framing aspect of the window and other types of windows
  - b. Section 504.9 exterior door – similarly looking at door assembly and not just the door moving component, including the door, the frame, the seal, and different types of doors.
  - c. Continue engaging with window and door manufacturers, industry, and research and testing.
  - d. Thermomechanical and modes of failure – there is currently no prescribed exposure level, like there is in other standards and parts of the world.

- e. Active system – other parts of the world have standards and guidance language that allows shutters as an alternative means for protecting window and door openings, currently the California code does not.
- f. Prescriptive and performance-based compliance options – there are currently several, including State Fire Marshal Standards 12-7A-1 and 12-7A-2, several National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and Underwriters Laboratories (UL) standards, and international standards notably Australian Standard AS1530.8.2, of which there is a body of testing knowledge and performance of windows for the exterior fire added.
- iii. Payam Bozorgchami confirms that utility teams are working on their codes and standards and that the energy commission will have questions about these types of systems in the future.
- iv. The subgroup will meet on the third Wednesday of the month, email [Daniel Gorham](#) to join the subgroup

9. Exterior Walls/ Eaves/Soffits/Under Floors – [Greg Andersen/Milad Shabanian](#)

- i. Greg Anderson says that an item to focus on is cleaning up language around the methods for exterior walls. He mentions that Milad had an encompassing proposal that is not moving forward at this time. The proposal covers exposure, protection, and based on the separation of other structures, whether to go with the rated walls and is on the list to work on. The sub-group is currently looking for new things, Greg Anderson highlights eaves, soffits, and anything done under floors.
- ii. Please email [Greg Andersen](#) if you wish to participate.

#### **IV. ROUNDTABLE**

- A. Milad Shabanian brings concerns regarding changing from Chapter 7A to the IWUI format that created incorrect references to the California Building Code and volunteers to chair a work group regarding editorial changes and errata. Crystal Sujeski says yes.
- B. Crystal Sujeski mentions that we are in a holding pattern as the group doesn't know what the 2027 IWUI will look like, she proposes that the next meeting be the first week of April before the public hearings. Subgroups may continue to do work from now until April. Mitchel Baker agrees. There are no objections.

#### **V. PUBLIC COMMENT**

- A. None

#### **VI. UPCOMING MEETING DATES FOR 2026:**

- A. Meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month at 1:00 pm PDT, postponed in roundtable discussion
- B. Next meeting: April 1, 2026

#### **VII. MEETING ADJOURNMENT AT 2:46 PM**

(Larry Williams/Greg Anderson-Motioned/Approved)

If you would like to watch the recording of this meeting, please visit the link below:

<https://youtu.be/Sda19OKDOhg>