

Insulation Advocate

NIA's Insulation Advocate: Update on April's Activities New Legislation to Include Insulation Language

After months and months of delay and political roadblocks, the U.S. Senate finally passed S.2012, the Energy Policy Modernization Act by a vote of 85-12 on April 25, 2016. This legislation is the partner legislation to the House passed H.R.8, the North American Energy Security and Infrastructure Act. As discussed in prior issues of *Insulation Advocate*, H.R.8 includes our language requiring the Department of Energy (DOE) to conduct a study on the impact mechanical insulation has on energy and water savings in federal buildings. We expect the House and Senate will work together to craft a final compromise piece of legislation that incorporates the 2 bills. While the DOE has already begun our study, we will continue our push to include this language in the final bill to ensure that the DOE conducts the study to its fullest extent and to continue to educate members of Congress on the immense impact mechanical insulation can and does have on our nation's energy and water use, potentially leading to the use of more insulation in federal buildings and other facilities.

The House Appropriations Committee recently released its 2017 Military Construction and Veteran Affairs Appropriations bill. The legislation contains funding to house, train, and equip military personnel, provide housing and services to military families, help maintain base infrastructure, and fund veteran's benefits and programs. NIA has been working with Representative Charlie Dent (R-PA), Chairman of the Military Construction, Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies Subcommittee to include language encouraging the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) to work with industry partners to conduct a mechanical insulation energy and water assessment at several representative VA hospitals. The assessment would calculate the energy and water savings possible through the use of insulation—this study could lead to the use of more insulation in hospitals and other commercial facilities. NIA plans to continue working with the committee to ensure this language is included in the final bill.

NIA recently joined nearly 100 organizations in signing a letter penned by the National Association of Wholesaler-Distributors (NAW) opposing the Department of Labor's (DOL's) proposed changes to the regulations governing which employees must be paid overtime. These proposals call for a 113% increase in the minimum salary threshold that must be earned by any employee classified as exempt from overtime payments under the "white collar exemption" to the overtime regulations. This proposal would change the threshold drastically and without taking into consideration the different costs of living in separate areas of the country.

In last month's *Insulation Advocate*, we shared that we had joined the National Institute of Building Sciences (NIBS) and dozens of other organizations in signing a joint Industry Statement on Resilience. This statement recognizes the reality that natural and manmade hazards represent a threat to the public and the strength of the nation. A large part of preparedness is recognizing the role that updated planning, building materials, and modern design, construction, and operational techniques play in making communities more prepared to face any potential challenges. NIBS, in collaboration with its strategic partners, is releasing a report on strategies the United States can use to prepare for

potential hazards. The final report will be launched at a special White House event, “Resilient Building Codes” on May 10, which NIA will be attending. More stringent building codes can help increase the use of insulation, since insulation provides energy and financial savings, personnel protection, and lengthens the life of mechanical systems.

Spring has thus far brought a flurry of activity for NIA, both on Capitol Hill and with our strategic partners. Stay tuned for more updates in the next issue of *Insulation Advocate*.

Best Regards,

Michele M. Jones

NIA EVP/CEO

National Insulation Association | 703-464-6422
12100 Sunset Hills Road | Suite 330 | Reston, VA 20190
www.Insulation.org | www.InsulationOutlook.com | www.InsulateMetalBuildings.org
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NIA is a not-for-profit trade association representing both merit (open shop) and union contractors, distributors, laminators, fabricators, and manufacturers that provide thermal insulation, insulation accessories, and components to the commercial, mechanical, and industrial markets throughout the nation. Since 1953, the northern Virginia-based association has been the voice of the insulation industry and is dedicated to keeping the commercial and industrial insulation industry up to date on the latest industry trends and technologies. For more information, visit www.Insulation.org.

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