

For Immediate Release

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Uponor Predicts Reinstatement of Crosslinked Polyethylene (PEX) in California Plumbing Code

Despite the recent repeal of crosslinked polyethylene (PEX) tubing from the California Plumbing Code, homebuilders, plumbing contractors and consumers should be heartened to know that Uponor will continue its efforts to fully reinstate PEX in the code.

"We are committed to giving Californians the right to choose the plumbing product that is best for them and their applications," says Rich Houle, associate product manager, Uponor Commercial Plumbing. "We are confident our efforts, coupled with those of the California Building Standards Commission (CBSC) and the Plastic Pipe and Fittings Association (PPFA), will restore PEX to the state code in the near future."



Following the 45-day comment period, which ended July 19, the California Building Standards Commission (CBSC) is evaluating a revised Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and will presumably put PEX back on the path to reinstatement into the state plumbing code.

PEX became part of the California Plumbing Code in August 2009, following the CBSC's January 2009 certification of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) on PEX and the commission's ensuing unanimous adoption of regulations approving PEX water distribution systems. Recently, however, the CBSC was compelled to repeal the inclusion of PEX in the state code, effective July 1, 2010, to comply with a court order.

"Uponor fully supports the CBSC in its efforts to address the issues the court raised about the EIR," says Houle. "But it is also important to note that the court's questions focused on technical and process issues in the EIR document, not on the suitability of PEX for plumbing systems."

Approximately 15 billion feet of Uponor PEX has been installed throughout the world over the past four decades — including the past 20 years in North America. PEX is certified to the stringent health standards set by ANSI/NSF, approved in all national building codes and widely used in the remaining 49 states as well as in all 10 Canadian provinces. More than half of all new homes built in the United States today feature PEX water distribution systems.

In addition, prior to the inclusion of PEX in the California Plumbing Code a year ago, 180 municipalities and counties within the state had already approved the use of PEX tubing as an alternate material to copper and other materials used for plumbing piping. Until such time that PEX is reinstated in the state code, those jurisdictions may continue to use PEX under those same alternate-materials provisions of California law.

The reinstatement process: Even though the CBSC necessarily removed PEX from the code to comply with a court order, the CBSC also submitted a revised EIR for public comment. Following the 45-day comment period, which ended July 19, the Commission is now evaluating the revised EIR, and will presumably put PEX back on the path to reinstatement into the state plumbing code, according to Houle.

Although PEX tubing is temporarily not part of the current state plumbing code, contractors may still install it if approved by California county and municipal governments and their code-equivalent authorities. Tradespeople should contact these local code officials for more information; additional information can be found at www.bsc.ca.gov. Furthermore, the temporary removal of PEX from the code does not affect any already-approved or permitted projects or work done under local ordinances, regulations or alternate-materials provisions.

“As the reinstatement process takes its inevitably successful course, our stance at Uponor remains as strong and confident as ever,” Houle continues. “Regardless of individual preferences, we fully support everyone’s right to use the plumbing material of their choice if that material meets the highest testing and listing standards required, and PEX does.”

According to Houle, “Given its many years of successful and proven performance in plumbing systems worldwide, Uponor PEX meets all the relevant criteria, and Californians deserve the same choice in systems that is currently enjoyed by builders and installers in all 49 other states.”

For more information about PEX in California, contact:

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Uponor, Inc. is a leading supplier of plumbing, fire safety and radiant heating and cooling systems for the residential and commercial building markets in the United States. Uponor, Inc. employs 380 people at its North American headquarters in Apple Valley, Minn. For more information, visit www.uponor-usa.com or call (800) 321-4739.

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Hi-res versions of a photograph to accompany this release are available for immediate download in .tif format by using this link: http://uponor.oreilly-depalma.com/2010/pex_cal_plumbing_codes.shtml

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