

Resolution No. 5

Date: 7/28/2018

City: Portland, OR

NAHB Resolution

Title: Ventilation Standards  
Sponsor: Energy and Green Codes & Standards Subcommittee of the  
Construction, Codes & Standards Committee  
Submitted by: Jim Zengel

WHEREAS, state legislative bodies and government agencies are proposing and adopting new legislation and regulations, and the model building codes are incorporating proposed changes to address indoor air quality concerns;

WHEREAS, air pollutants in housing, including outdoor pollutants, moisture, formaldehyde, volatile organic compounds, chlordane and other pesticides, combustion spillage and radon are usually best controlled by source reduction and smart design, and have already been greatly reduced through source control;

WHEREAS, only anecdotal information and small-scale studies are available on health effects of indoor air pollutants, pollutant levels and air infiltration rates in new homes;

WHEREAS, the energy cost of excessive ventilation can be substantial and can undercut the value of the energy efficient features in new homes;

WHEREAS, whole house mechanical ventilation systems with exhaust fans, fresh air intakes, and a heat recovery ventilator (HRV) or energy recovery ventilator (ERV) system can add several thousand dollars to the cost of a house, above the cost of the basic HVAC system;

WHEREAS, few occupants complain of inadequate air quality in homes, and unlike office occupants, residential occupants can open windows when they need to;

WHEREAS, air infiltration and natural ventilation through window, doors and vents have been shown to be sufficient in climates with large indoor/outdoor differentials in temperature and pressure that promote air infiltration, and in warm year-round climates where windows are always open, and houses in warmer, calmer climates can be built less tightly and can rely solely on air infiltration and natural ventilation;

WHEREAS, changes to construction codes and standards are being incorporated in the absence of comprehensive data and reliable testing procedures; and

WHEREAS, the National Association of Home Builders’ members want to build the best building possible so that the public can have safe, healthy, energy efficient, and affordable housing,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB):

1. Urge the federal government, and private sector codes and standards developers, to work cooperatively together, and with NAHB and the Home Innovation Research Labs, to conduct sound research on ventilation for acceptable indoor air quality that:
  - (i) More precisely identifies and quantifies the indoor air quality conditions that exist in homes, and
  - (ii) Determines the true impact of proposed requirements for ventilation systems and related energy consumption on housing affordability.
2. Support federal legislation to provide research funding to evaluate the indoor air quality issue.
3. Support indoor air quality research regarding residential housing.
4. Support development of practical and affordable solutions to any regional or national problem that may result from those conditions, ensuring those solutions take into account regional climate conditions.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that NAHB supports the ventilation requirement, in codes and standards, of openable windows or passive stack vents (in applicable buildings) in kitchen and bathrooms in lieu of mechanical ventilation systems or externally vented exhaust fans.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that NAHB oppose any new indoor air quality ventilation requirements in legislation or construction codes and standards for all residential buildings until such time that it is demonstrated through field studies including pollutant levels and air infiltration rates, that a significant indoor air quality problem exists, is solved by additional ventilation, and that the problem cannot be addressed by source control and/or better design of ventilation systems.

Board of Directors Action:	APPROVED
Executive Board Action:	Recommends Approval
Resolutions Committee Action:	Recommends Approval
Construction, Codes & Standards Committee Action:	Recommends Approval
State and Local Government Affairs Committee Action:	Recommends Approval
Federal Governmental Affairs Committee Action:	Recommends Approval
Energy & Green Codes & Standards Subcommittee of the Construction, Codes & Standards Committee Action:	Recommends Approval