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Concrete Masonry Check-off Program Authorization Passes US Congress

[Herndon, VA – October 3, 2018] Earlier today, the U.S. Senate passed the *Concrete Masonry Products Research, Education and Promotion Act*, providing Congressional authorization for the concrete masonry products industry to develop its own commodity checkoff program to support needed industry initiatives. The concrete masonry products bill was included in [H.R. 302](#) as part of the Federal Aviation Administration Reauthorization Act of 2018. Having already passed the House of Representatives, it now goes to President Trump, who is expected to sign before October 7.

“This is a great day for our industry,” said Major Ogilvie of CEMEX USA, national chair of the concrete masonry checkoff initiative since 2010. “We demonstrated a level of perseverance on this initiative that is only matched by the resilience of the products that we manufacture. By standing together, we will not only strengthen our industry, but our communities. We applaud the members of Congress for recognizing that the small businesses in our industry can accomplish even greater things together if we can more effectively pool our resources to promote ourselves.”

“Our work is just beginning,” said National Concrete Masonry Association Chairman of the Board Kent Waide of Ruby Concrete. “Congress did not create a concrete masonry checkoff program, they only authorized it. Our entire industry will now begin the earnest discussions about how we develop a program that is meaningful to concrete block manufacturers of all kinds – those large and small, those in all regions of the U.S., and those with all kinds of local market interests. We will present the value proposition to rationalize an increased investment to collectively promote the value of concrete masonry systems.”

An industry referendum on program creation would likely occur in mid-to-late 2019, with every company that manufactures concrete masonry products being provided the opportunity to vote.

Numerous commodity checkoff programs already exist. Most of these programs relate to agricultural products under the management of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) oversees two such programs: propane and heating oil. Concrete masonry products would be the second such program related to construction products, the other being softwood lumber under USDA, and the first under the Department of Commerce.

Ogilvie expressed pride in the manner in which the advocacy effort was conducted.

“Manufacturers and contractors in our industry invested a lot of time and energy to get to know their representatives and to share the impact of their businesses on local communities. We visited hundreds of congressional offices, secured nearly 300 bi-partisan co-sponsors when we were a stand-alone bill, and we were frequently praised on Capitol Hill for doing this the ‘right way’.” Ogilvie also praised the hard work of the bill sponsors who worked within a bipartisan approach to figure out how to move the legislation in a challenging environment.

Representatives Brett Guthrie (R-KY) and Kathy Castor (D-FL) and Senators Roy Blunt (R-MO) and Bill Nelson (D-FL) and have each acted as bill sponsors for the last three congressional terms.

NCMA President Robert Thomas maintains that the real winner through this congressional action is the general public. “People in this country deserve to live, work, shop, and learn in buildings that are resilient and durable. If we are successful, there will be more structures locally sourced, manufactured and constructed, creating more American jobs. These structures will be thoughtfully built with “strength,” resulting in more fire-resistant, energy-efficient, and cost-effective buildings that do not rot, burn, or decay.”

Another notable inclusion in the FAA reauthorization was the Disaster Recovery Reform Act, which represents an unprecedented shift in disaster resilience policy in the U.S. NCMA is an active partner in the [BuildStrong Coalition](#) advocating for enhanced pre-disaster mitigation funding and applauds Congress for recognizing that building decisions matter! In particular, NCMA compliments its concrete masonry checkoff bill sponsors who continue to be significant leaders on resilience legislation.

For more information about the concrete masonry products checkoff initiative and for future updates, visit www.cmucheckoff.com.

The National Concrete Masonry Association is the national trade association representing the producers and suppliers of concrete masonry products, including concrete block, manufactured stone veneer, segmental retaining walls and articulating concrete block. For over 100 years, the Association’s mission remains to advance, protect and promote the common interests of its

members. Through leadership, promotion, education, research, government relations and partnering, NCMA ensures that members' products are the building materials of choice.

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If you would like more information about this topic, please contact NCMA President Robert Thomas at 703-713-1900, or email rthomas@ncma.org.