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# Multifamily Case Study in Midland Michigan

**Brian Lieburn**  
R&D Research Scientist  
Residential Application Development



# Brian Lieburn

## R&D Research Scientist

- Dow Building Solutions since 2010
- Primary: Residential Application Development
- Secondary: U.S. & Canada Fire Specialist
- 25 Years in Production Homebuilding
- BS from University of Wisconsin - Stout





# Multifamily Case Study

## Midland, MI Climate Zone 5

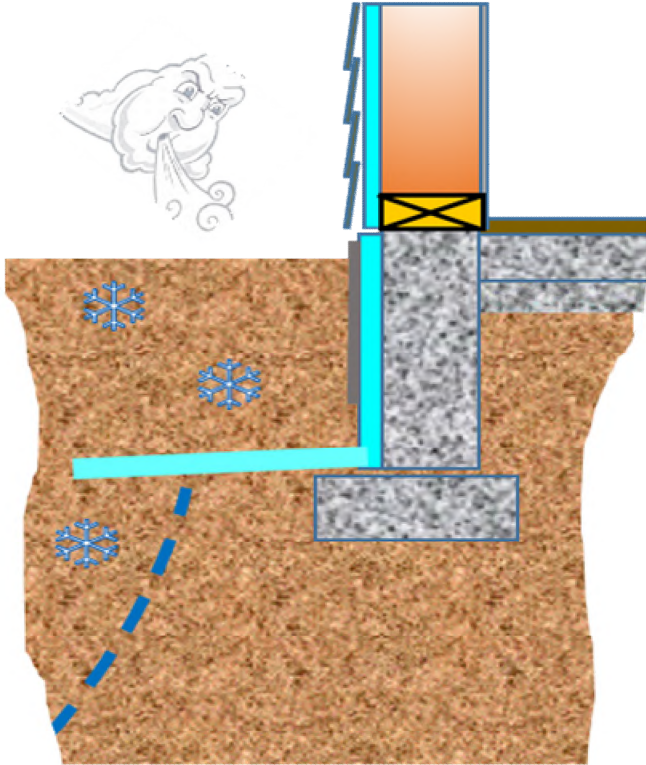


- Collaboration between Redwood Living & DowDuPont
- Redwood builds single story apartment homes on slab foundations
- Build & Rent
  - Durability & Maintenance
  - Promote Energy Efficiency
- 5-Year, two building research project

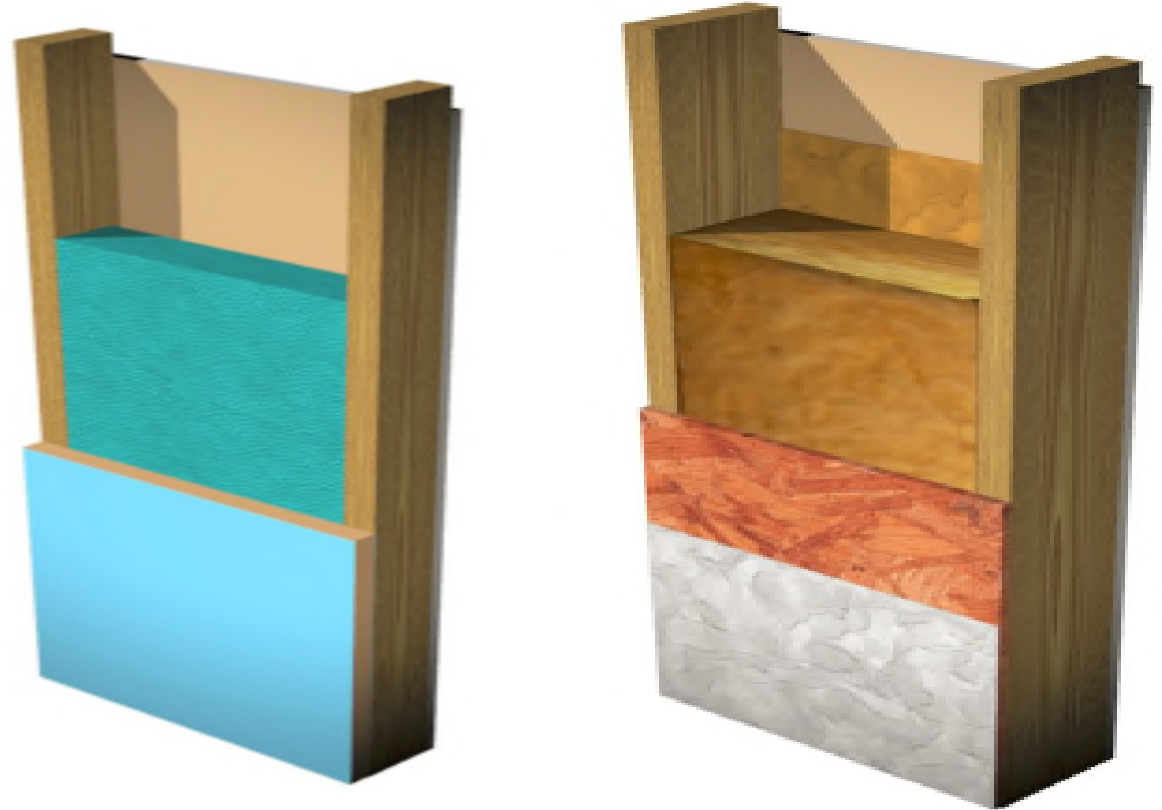


# Focus of Research

## Frost Protected Shallow Foundation



## 2x4 ci vs. 2x6 cavity only insulation





# Why Frost Protected Shallow Foundation (FPSF)?

- FPSF have been around for a long time
- They should be able to save money
  - Habitat for Humanity Michigan affiliates
- Why not more popular?

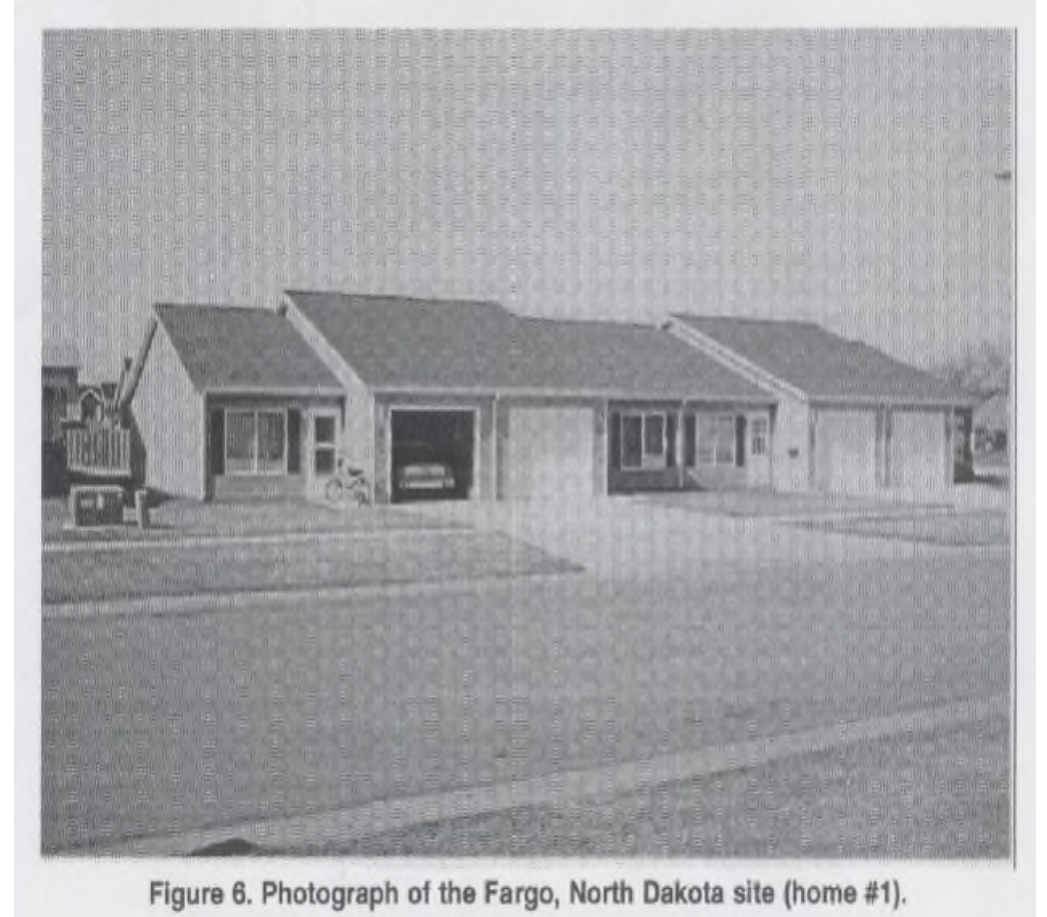
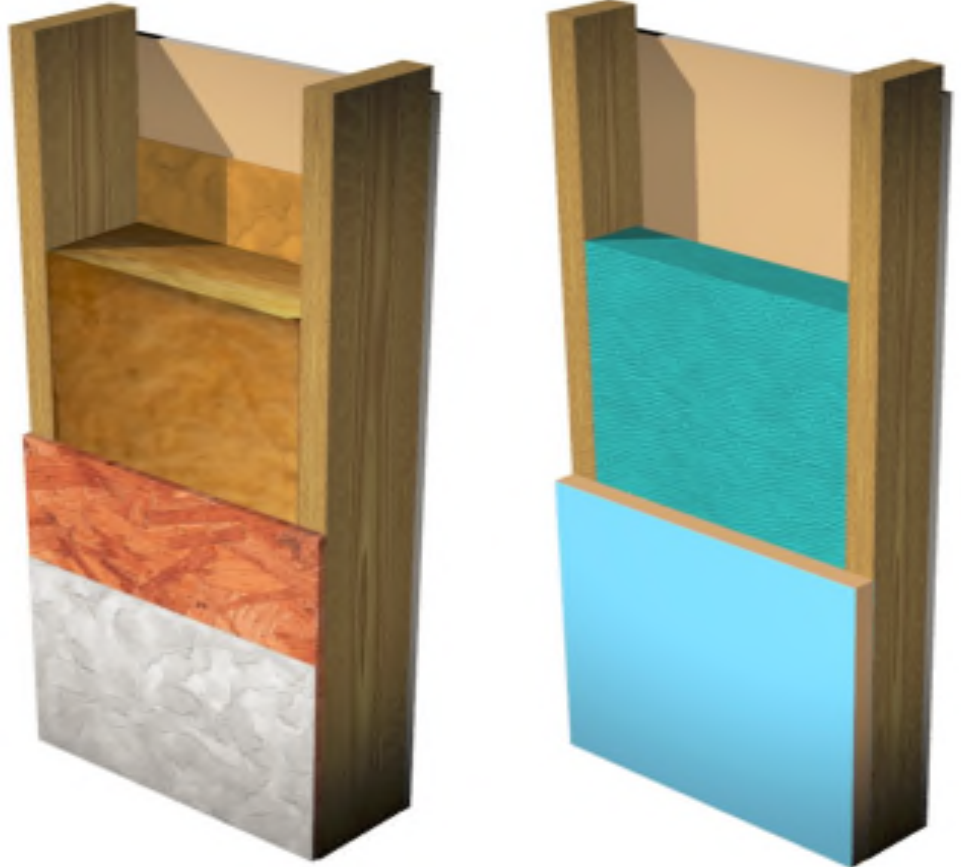


Figure 6. Photograph of the Fargo, North Dakota site (home #1).

# Why compare 2x4 ci vs. 2x6 cavity only?

## 12 Home research (TEETH) project hindsight

- 2x4 ci with SPF in the cavity better hygrothermal performance
  - How much did the SPF impact results?
- 2x6 R-19 OSB went above 20% moisture content each winter
  - Forensic investigation showed signs of moisture
  - No discernable fungal decay
  - Bending strength test of OSB implied a strength loss (no control sample)





# Frost Protected Shallow Foundation

# FPSF Research Questions

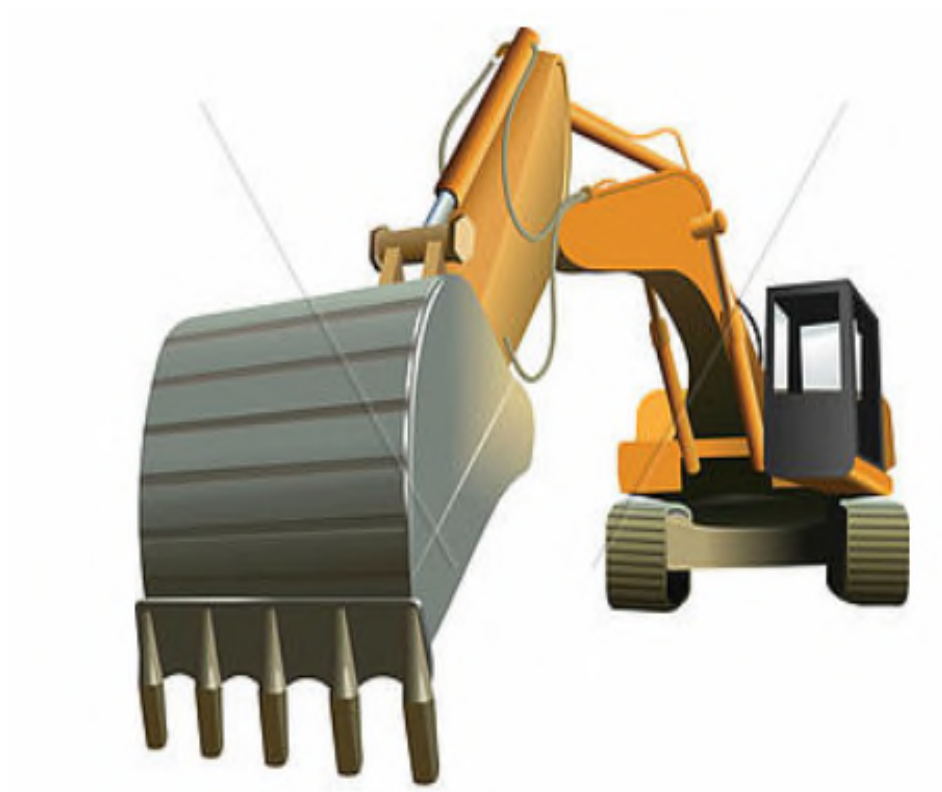
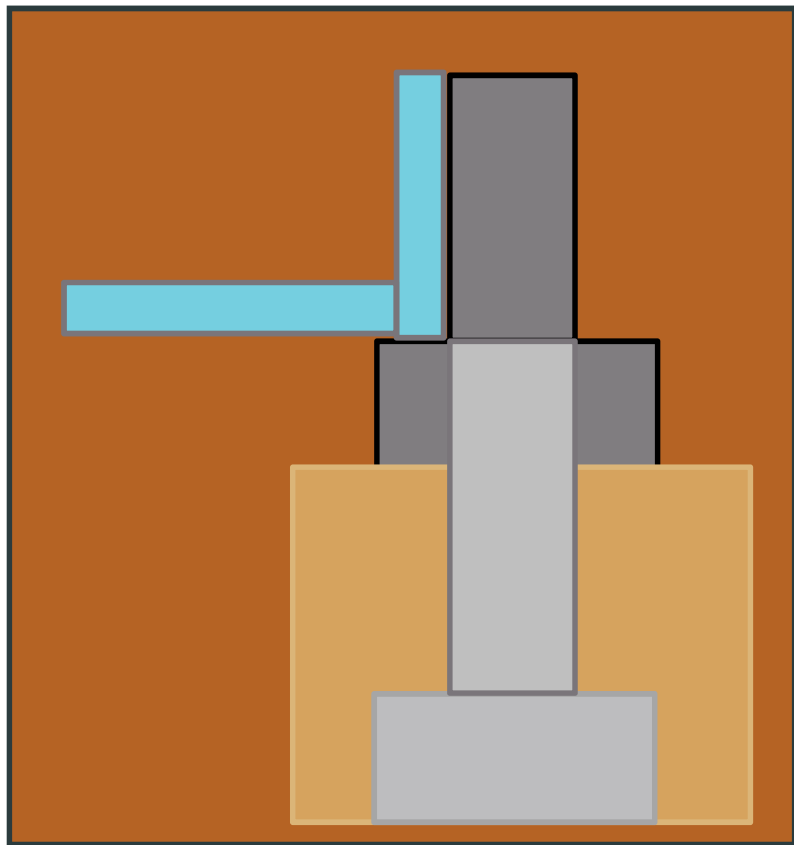
- Why are FPSF not more common?
- Does FPSF construction realize cost saving potential?
- How does energy transfer differ between FPSF vs. stem wall?
- Does FPSF provide a slab edge comfort advantage over Redwood standard stem wall?





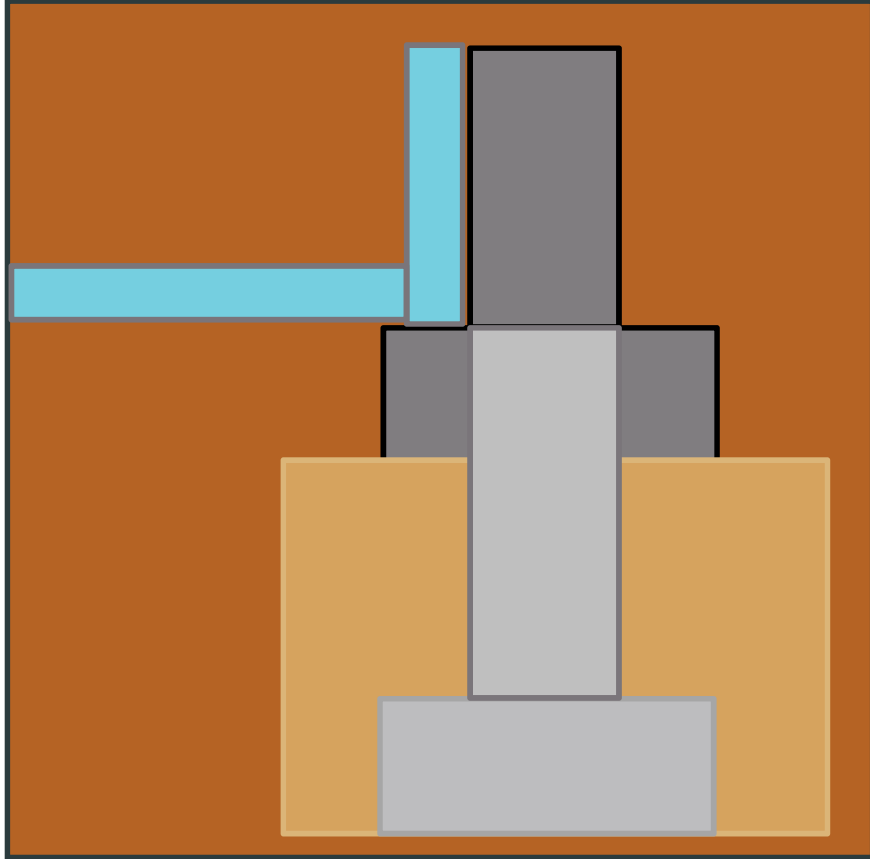
# Benefits of FPSF

## Excavation Savings \$



# Benefits of FPSF

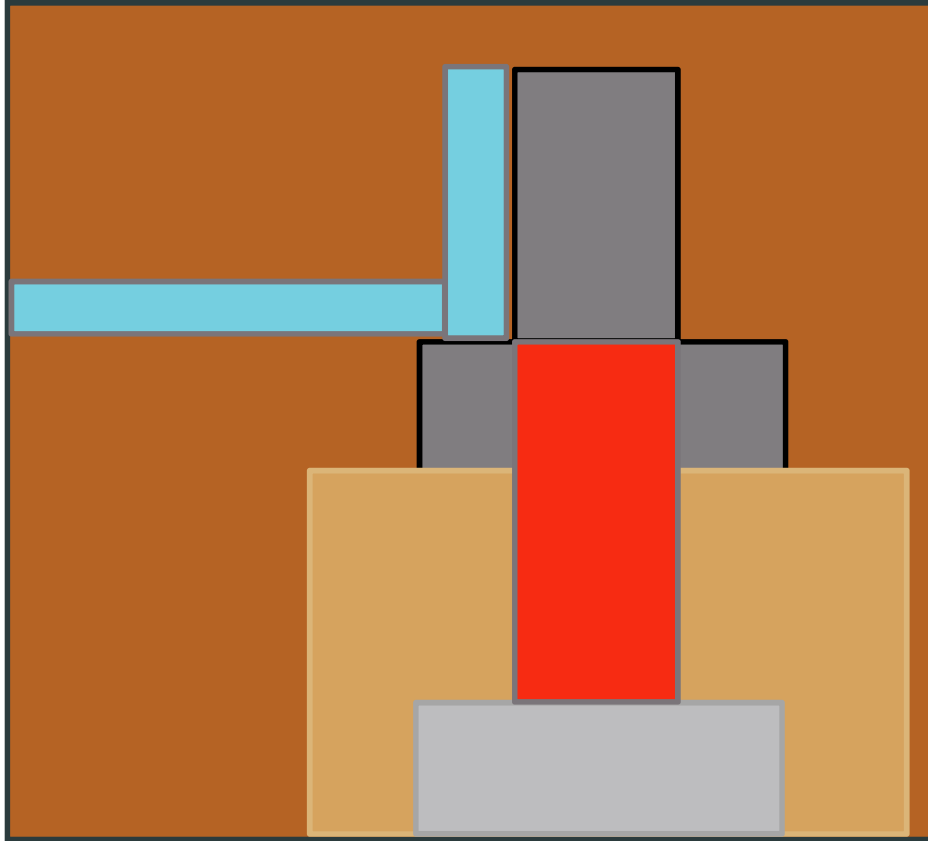
Hauling or Site Grading Savings \$





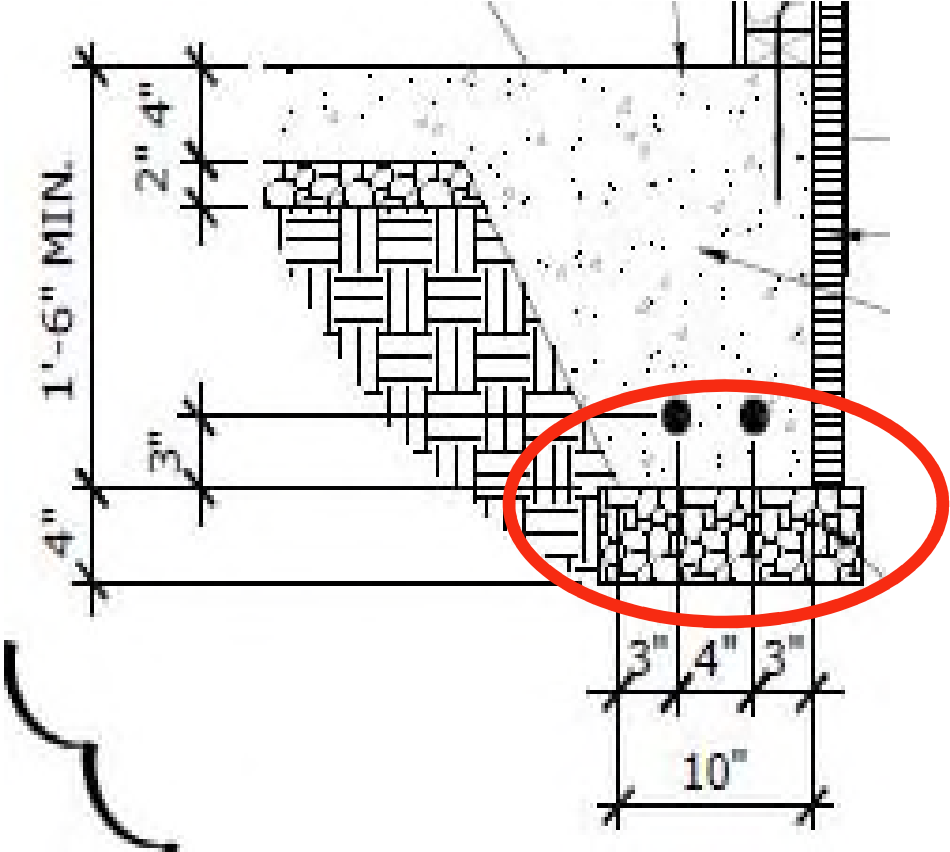
# Benefits of FPSF

## Concrete Savings \$



# Added Cost of FPSF

## Additional Gravel \$



# Added Cost of FPSF

## Additional Insulation

FPSF Requirements  
often less than IECC

**TABLE R403.3(1)**  
**MINIMUM FOOTING DEPTH AND INSULATION REQUIREMENTS FOR FROST-PROTECTED FOOTINGS IN HEATED BUILDINGS<sup>a</sup>**

AIR FREEZING INDEX (°F-days) <sup>b</sup>	MINIMUM FOOTING DEPTH, D (inches)	VERTICAL INSULATION R-VALUE <sup>c,d</sup>	HORIZONTAL INSULATION R-VALUE <sup>c,e</sup>		HORIZONTAL INSULATION DIMENSIONS PER FIGURE R403.3(1) (inches)		
			Along walls	At corners	A	B	C
1,500 or less	12	4.5	Not required	Not required	Not required	Not required	Not required
2,000	14	5.6	Not required	Not required	Not required	Not required	Not required
2,500	16	6.7	1.7	4.9	12	24	40
3,000	16	7.8	6.5	8.6	12	24	40
3,500	16	9.0	8.0	11.2	24	30	60
4,000	16	10.1	10.5	13.1	24	36	60

**TABLE N1102.1.2 (R402.1.2)**  
**INSULATION AND FENESTRATION REQUIREMENTS BY COMPONENT<sup>a</sup>**

CLIMATE ZONE	FENESTRATION U-FACTOR <sup>b</sup>	SKYLIGHT <sup>b</sup> U-FACTOR	GLAZED FENESTRATION SHGC <sup>b,e</sup>	CEILING R-VALUE	WOOD FRAME WALL R-VALUE	MASS WALL R-VALUE <sup>i</sup>	FLOOR R-VALUE	BASEMENT <sup>c</sup> WALL R-VALUE	SLAB <sup>d</sup> R-VALUE & DEPTH	CRAWL SPACE <sup>e</sup> WALL R-VALUE
1	NR	0.75	0.25	30	13	3/4	13	0	0	0
2	0.40	0.65	0.25	38	13	4/6	13	0	0	0
3	0.35	0.55	0.25	38	20 or 13 + 5 <sup>h</sup>	8/13	19	5/13 <sup>f</sup>	0	5/13
4 except Marine	0.35	0.55	0.40	49	20 or 13 + 5 <sup>h</sup>	8/13	19	10/13	10, 2 ft	10/13
5 and Marine 4	0.32	0.55	NR	49	20 or 13 + 5 <sup>h</sup>	13/17	30 <sup>g</sup>	15/19	10, 2 ft	15/19
6	0.32	0.55	NR	49	20 + 5 or 13 + 10 <sup>h</sup>	15/20	30 <sup>g</sup>	15/19	10, 4 ft	15/19
7 and 8	0.32	0.55	NR	49	20 + 5 or 13 + 10 <sup>h</sup>	19/21	38 <sup>g</sup>	15/19	10, 4 ft	15/19



# Added Cost of FPSF

## Additional Insulation

- Non-conditioned areas
  - Front porches
- Semi-conditioned areas
  - Garages



# Case Study – Habitat for Humanity (MI)

	Total Cost
Basement	\$33,284
Crawl Space	\$18,235
FPSF Slab	\$10,800

	Total Cost
Crawl vs. Basement	\$15,049
FPSF vs. Basement	\$22,484
FPSF vs. Crawl	\$7,435



# Redwood Multi-Family in Midland, MI

- Shared Habitat for Humanity savings of FPSF
- Redwood estimated they too could save money
- Ideal site for FPSF
  - Flat site
  - Engineered soils
- Also shared hygrothermal data from our 12-home research project
- Interested in comparing 2x4 ci vs 2x6 cavity only



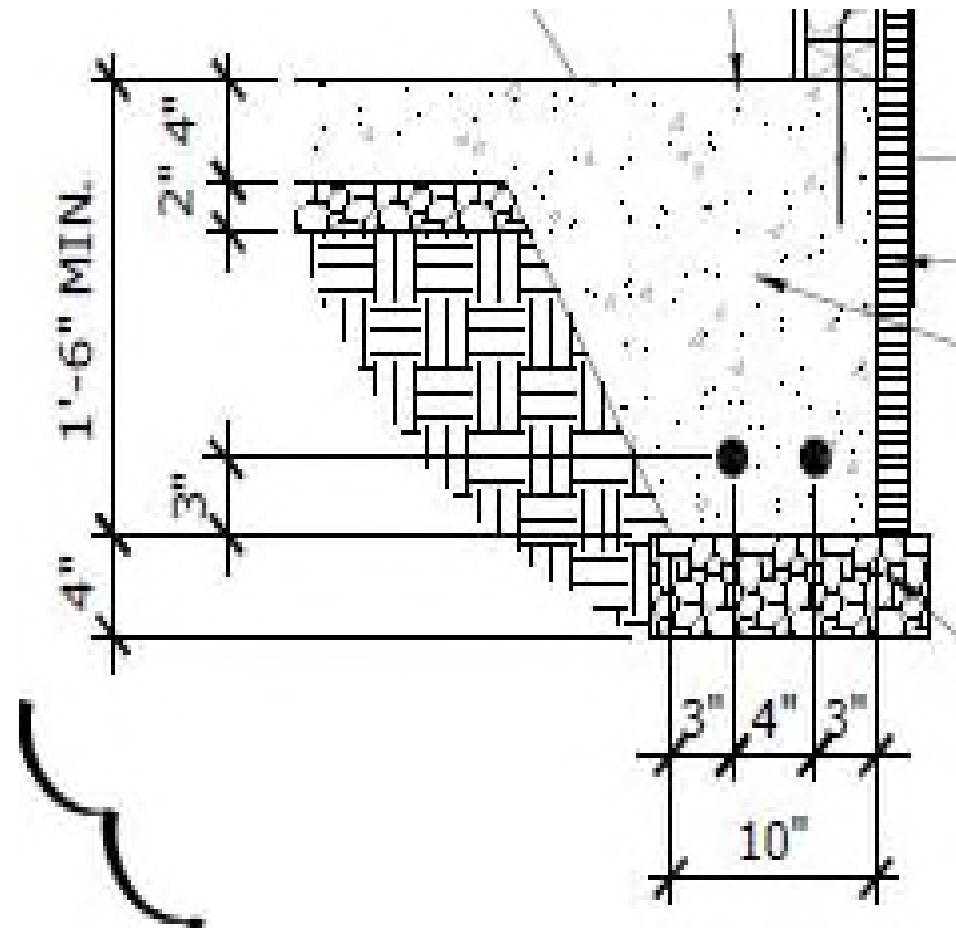
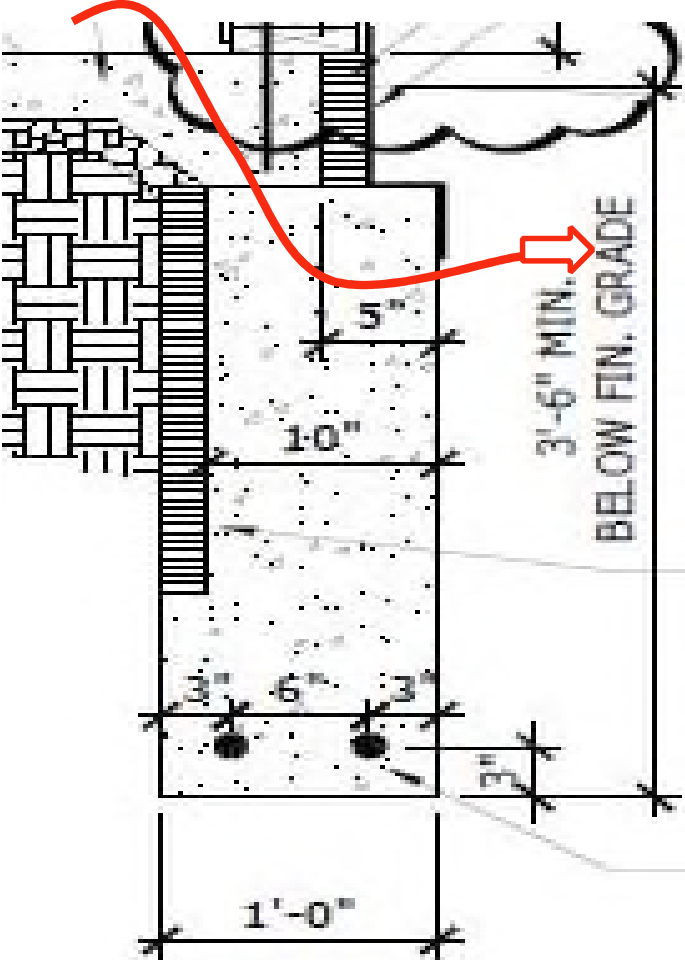


The site plan illustrates a residential layout with the following details:

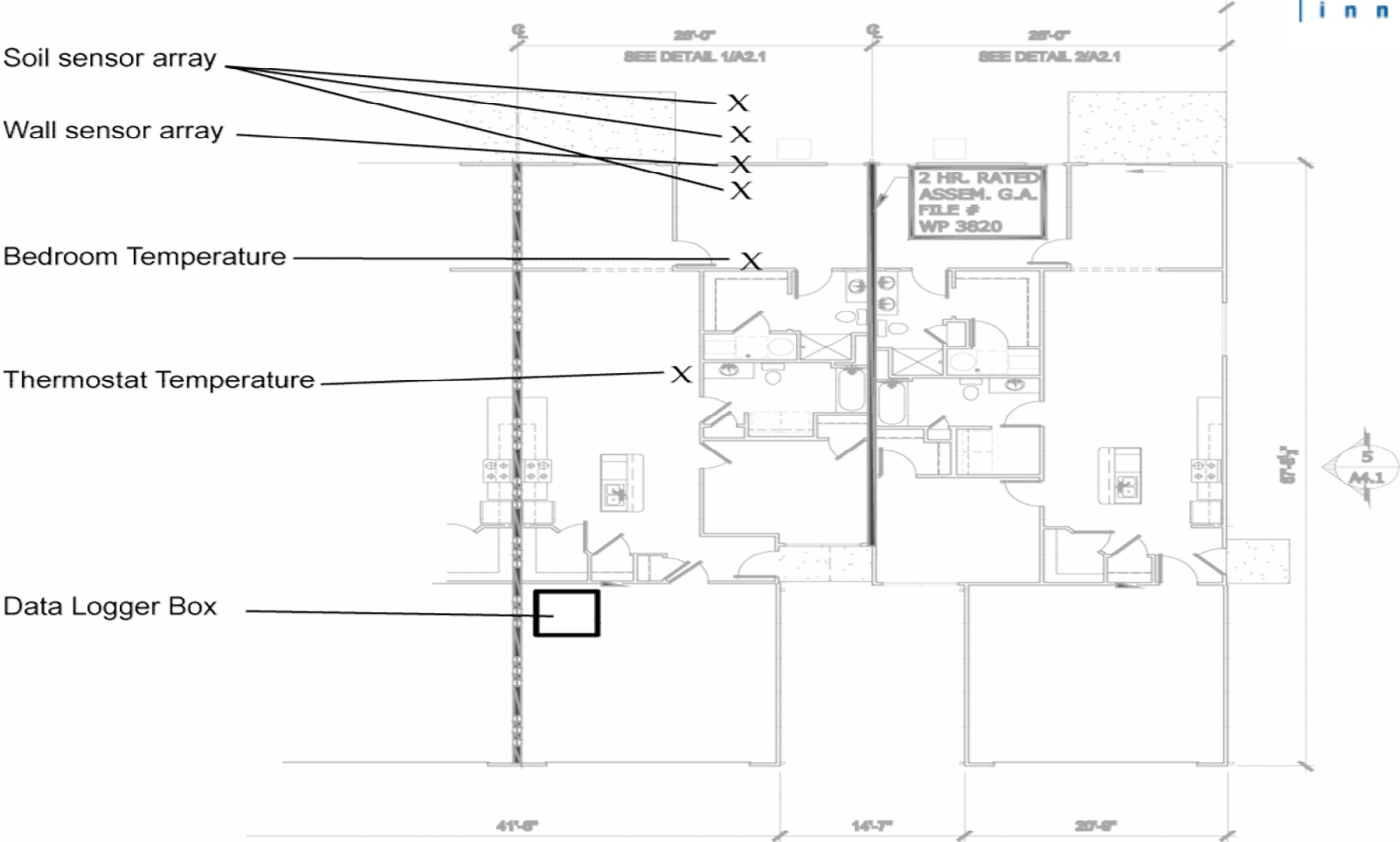
- Home 1:** Located in the upper left quadrant, outlined in a thick black border. It is situated between lots 59-64 and 65-70.
- Home 2:** Located in the upper right quadrant, also outlined in a thick black border. It is situated between lots 65-70 and 71-76.
- Gemma Drive:** A horizontal road running through the center of the plan. It features a centerline labeled 'C ROAD' and a bearing of  $N 84^{\circ}37'32'' W$  with a distance of 177.48'. The road is flanked by lots 59-64 on the north and 71-76 on the south.
- Orion Court:** A vertical road on the right side of the plan, labeled 'ORION COURT' and 'ORION COURT' vertically. It has a bearing of  $N 90^{\circ}00'00'' W$  with a distance of 172.26'. It intersects Gemma Drive and runs parallel to a property line labeled '620.89'.
- Other Features:**
  - Lot Numbers:** Lots are numbered 59-76, with some lots (e.g., 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76) having specific dimensions and bearings.
  - Dimensions:** Various dimensions are provided for lots and roads, including lot widths (e.g., 18' TYP, 22' TYP, 24', 25', 31', 46', 54', 57', 63', 66', 68', 70', 72', 74', 76', 78', 80', 82', 84', 86', 88', 90', 92', 94', 96', 98', 100', 102', 104', 106', 108', 110', 112', 114', 116', 118', 120', 122', 124', 126', 128', 130', 132', 134', 136', 138', 140', 142', 144', 146', 148', 150', 152', 154', 156', 158', 160', 162', 164', 166', 168', 170', 172', 174', 176', 178', 180', 182', 184', 186', 188', 190', 192', 194', 196', 198', 200', 202', 204', 206', 208', 210', 212', 214', 216', 218', 220', 222', 224', 226', 228', 230', 232', 234', 236', 238', 240', 242', 244', 246', 248', 250', 252', 254', 256', 258', 260', 262', 264', 266', 268', 270', 272', 274', 276', 278', 280', 282', 284', 286', 288', 290', 292', 294', 296', 298', 300', 302', 304', 306', 308', 310', 312', 314', 316', 318', 320', 322', 324', 326', 328', 330', 332', 334', 336', 338', 340', 342', 344', 346', 348', 350', 352', 354', 356', 358', 360', 362', 364', 366', 368', 370', 372', 374', 376', 378', 380', 382', 384', 386', 388', 390', 392', 394', 396', 398', 400', 402', 404', 406', 408', 410', 412', 414', 416', 418', 420', 422', 424', 426', 428', 430', 432', 434', 436', 438', 440', 442', 444', 446', 448', 450', 452', 454', 456', 458', 460', 462', 464', 466', 468', 470', 472', 474', 476', 478', 480', 482', 484', 486', 488', 490', 492', 494', 496', 498', 500', 502', 504', 506', 508', 510', 512', 514', 516', 518', 520', 522', 524', 526', 528', 530', 532', 534', 536', 538', 540', 542', 544', 546', 548', 550', 552', 554', 556', 558', 560', 562', 564', 566', 568', 570', 572', 574', 576', 578', 580', 582', 584', 586', 588', 590', 592', 594', 596', 598', 600', 602', 604', 606', 608', 610', 612', 614', 616', 618', 620', 622', 624', 626', 628', 630', 632', 634', 636', 638', 640', 642', 644', 646', 648', 650', 652', 654', 656', 658', 660', 662', 664', 666', 668', 670', 672', 674', 676', 678', 680', 682', 684', 686', 688', 690', 692', 694', 696', 698', 700', 702', 704', 706', 708', 710', 712', 714', 716', 718', 720', 722', 724', 726', 728', 730', 732', 734', 736', 738', 740', 742', 744', 746', 748', 750', 752', 754', 756', 758', 760', 762', 764', 766', 768', 770', 772', 774', 776', 778', 780', 782', 784', 786', 788', 790', 792', 794', 796', 798', 800', 802', 804', 806', 808', 810', 812', 814', 816', 818', 820', 822', 824', 826', 828', 830', 832', 834', 836', 838', 840', 842', 844', 846', 848', 850', 852', 854', 856', 858', 860', 862', 864', 866', 868', 870', 872', 874', 876', 878', 880', 882', 884', 886', 888', 890', 892', 894', 896', 898', 900', 902', 904', 906', 908', 910', 912', 914', 916', 918', 920', 922', 924', 926', 928', 930', 932', 934', 936', 938', 940', 942', 944', 946', 948', 950', 952', 954', 956', 958', 960', 962', 964', 966', 968', 970', 972', 974', 976', 978', 980', 982', 984', 986', 988', 990', 992', 994', 996', 998', 1000').
  - Orientation:** A large red arrow points upwards on the right side, labeled 'N' for North.



# Stem wall vs. FPSF Design



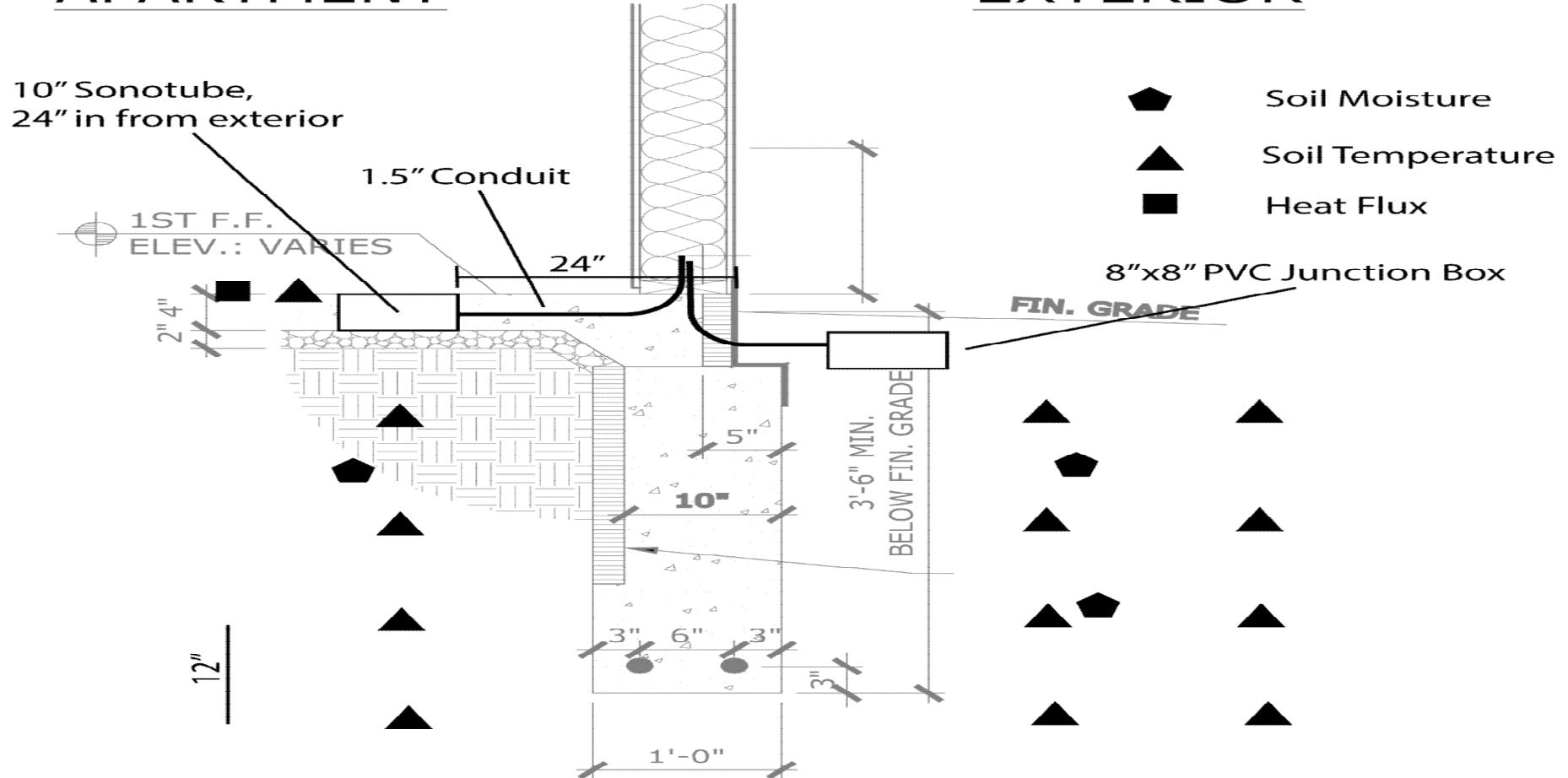
# Sensor Locations



## Below Grade Sensor

## APARTMENT

## EXTERIOR





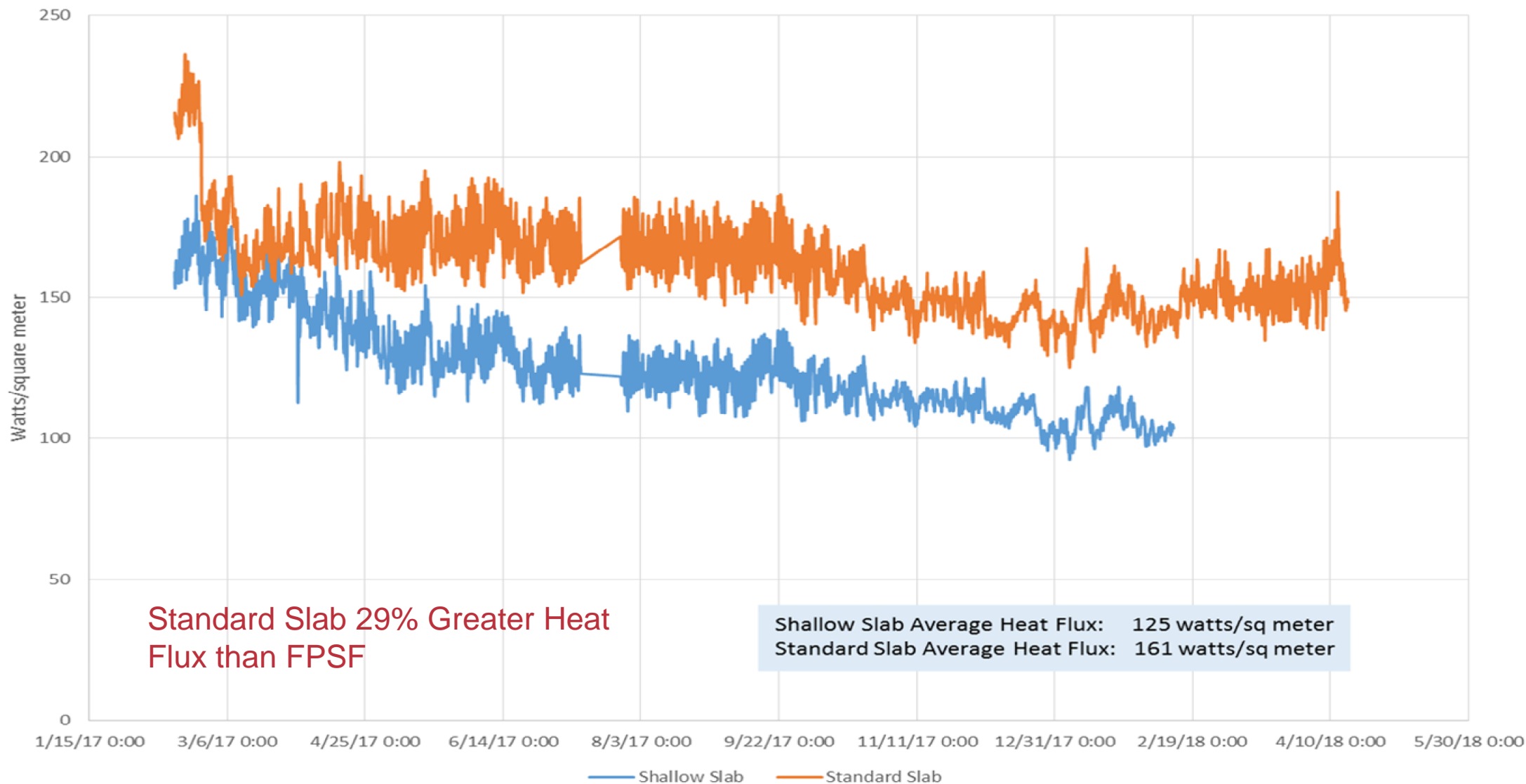
SHALLOW

0774



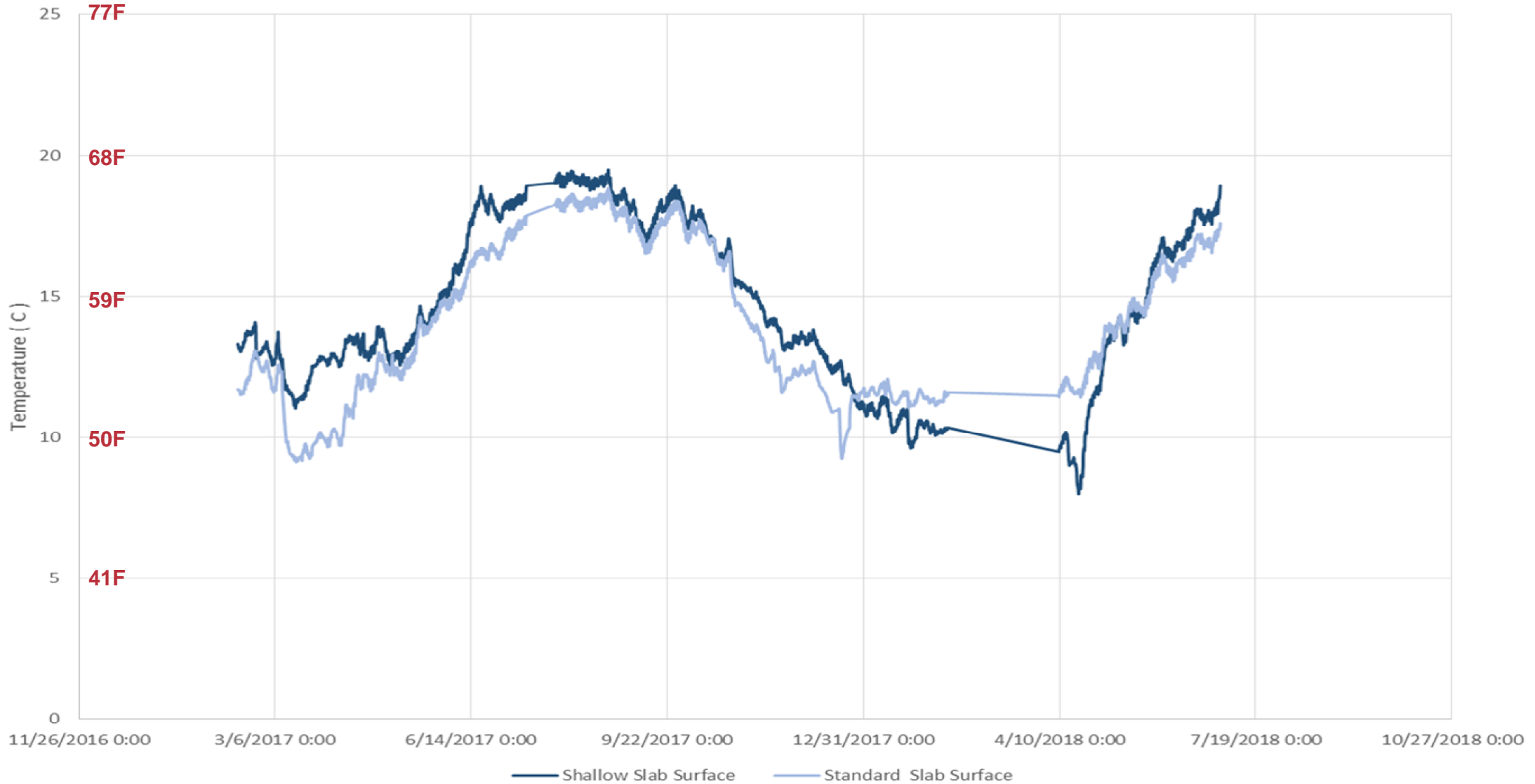
# Heat Flux

## Standard Slab Compared to Shallow Slab Foundation

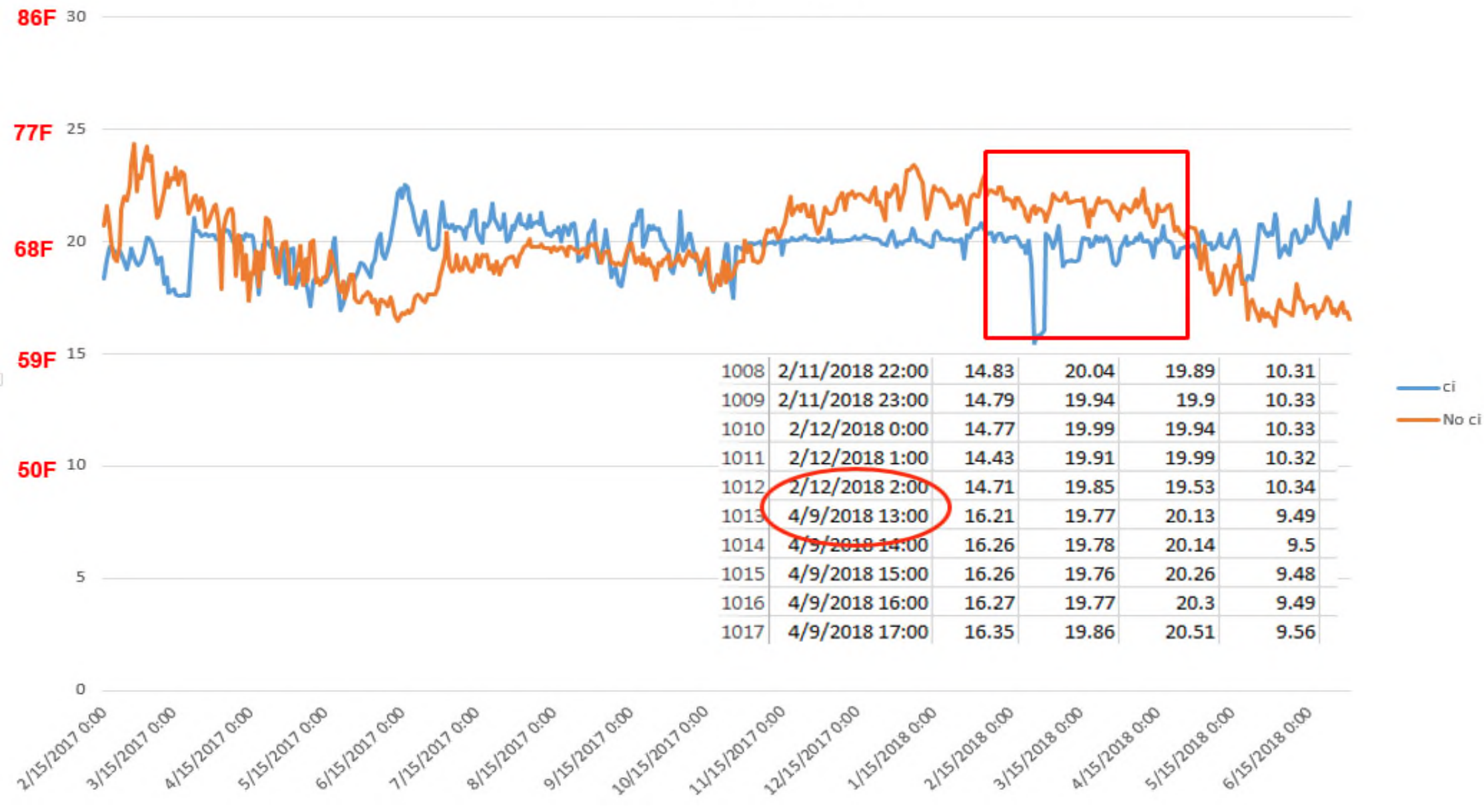


# Temperature

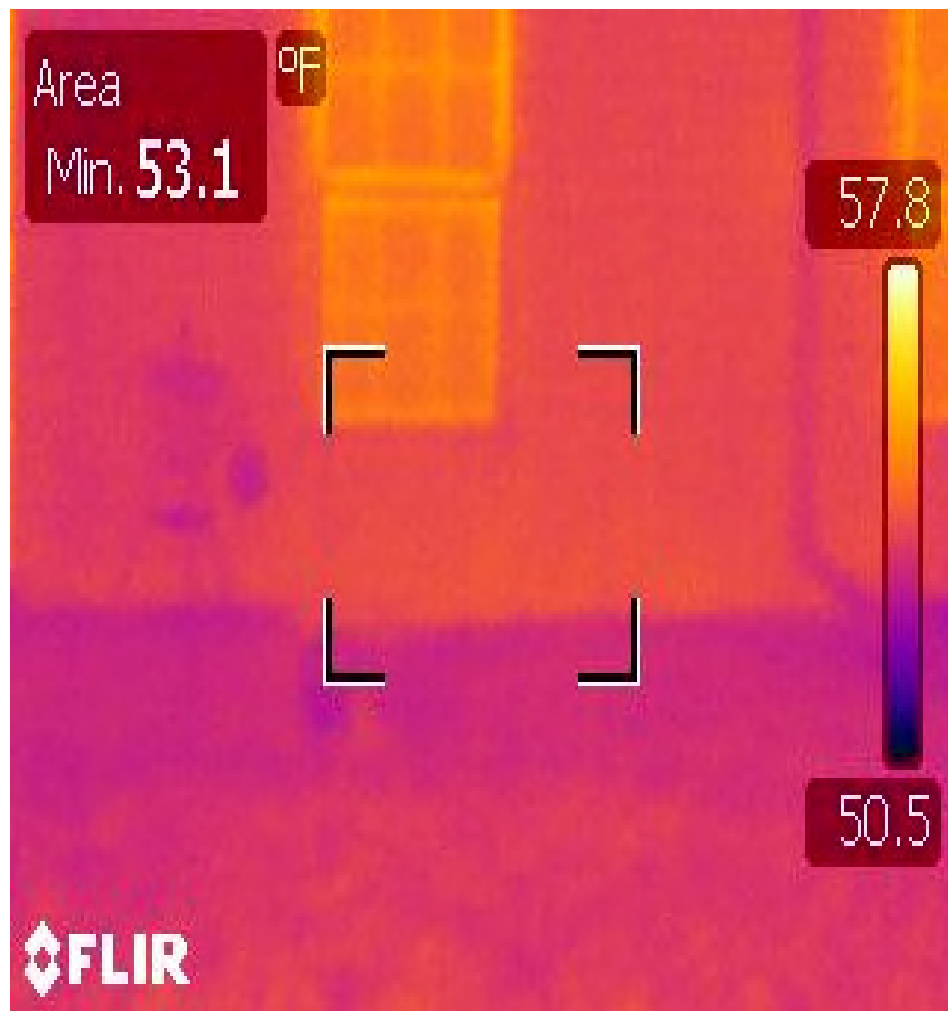
## Frost Protected Shallow and Standard Foundations



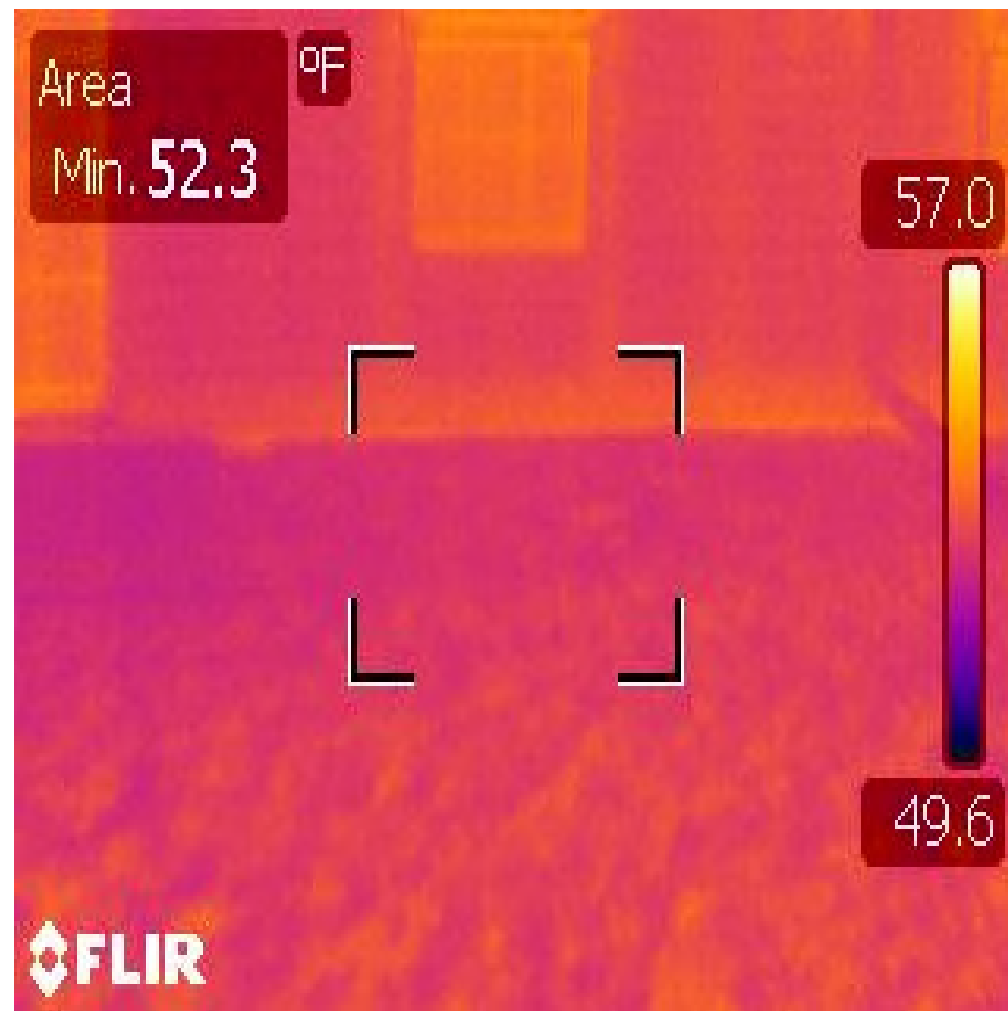
## BR Room Temp



# FPSF



# Standard Foundation





# Cost Comparison






Phase	FPSF Foundation	Standard Foundation
Additional Excavation	NA	\$600
BG Insulation	\$2,991	\$1,641
Additional Insulation Labor	\$360	NA
Concrete	\$3,585	\$6,576
Additional Gravel & Placement	\$600	NA
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$7,536</b>	<b>\$8,817</b>
<b>BUILDING DIFFERENCE</b>	<b>[\$1,281]</b>	
<b>PER UNIT DIFFERENCE (6 units per building)</b>	<b>[\$213]</b>	

# Why is FPSF not more common?

- FPSF cost savings not fully realized
- People like basements
- Bearing soil depth
- Sloped lots
- The colder the climate the more potential savings



# Feasibility of FPSF

- **FPSF can save \$ but you must consider:**
  - Frost Depth  Colder = greater savings
  - Depth of bearing soil  Shallower or compacted = better
  - Slope of lot  Flatter = better
  - Unconditioned areas (porches)  smaller = better
  - Semi-conditioned areas (garages)  smaller or none = better

# FPSF Summary

## Learnings to Date

- Better understanding of why FPSF are not more common
- Understand the variables that can make FPSF feasible
- FPSF has a lower heat flux than Redwood standard foundation

## More Research

- Need to better understand slab temperature inversion
- Need cold temperature IR photos
- Compare ground temperature and moisture content data



# 2x4 ci vs. 2x6 Cavity only Insulation

# Above Grade Wall Research Questions

1. How does 2x4 R5 ci with R14 cellulose compare hygrothermally to 2x6 R21 cellulose in the cavity only insulation?
2. Does XPS ci trap moisture?
3. What is the cost to build each strategy?
4. How does moisture cycling of OSB impact strength over time?

# Research Neighborhood (TEETH Project)

Midland, Michigan Climate Zone 5-6

## 2006 IECC



49-Kendall



48-Somerset



50-Preston



## 2012 IECC



51-Kendall



53-Preston



52-Somerset



54-Preston



56-Kendall

## 2012 IECC CI



55-Somerset

## Beyond 2012 IECC



59-Preston



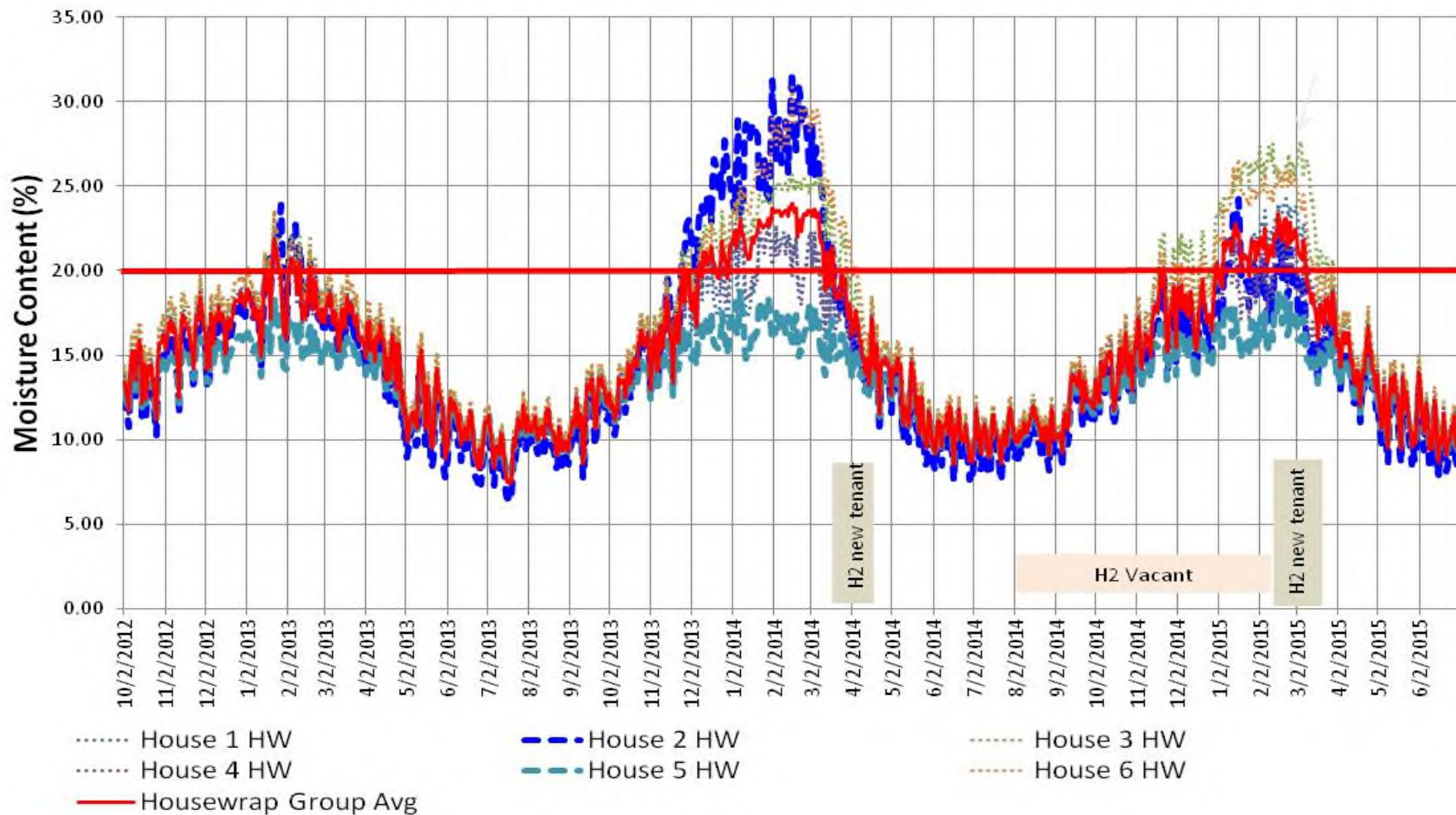
58-Somerset

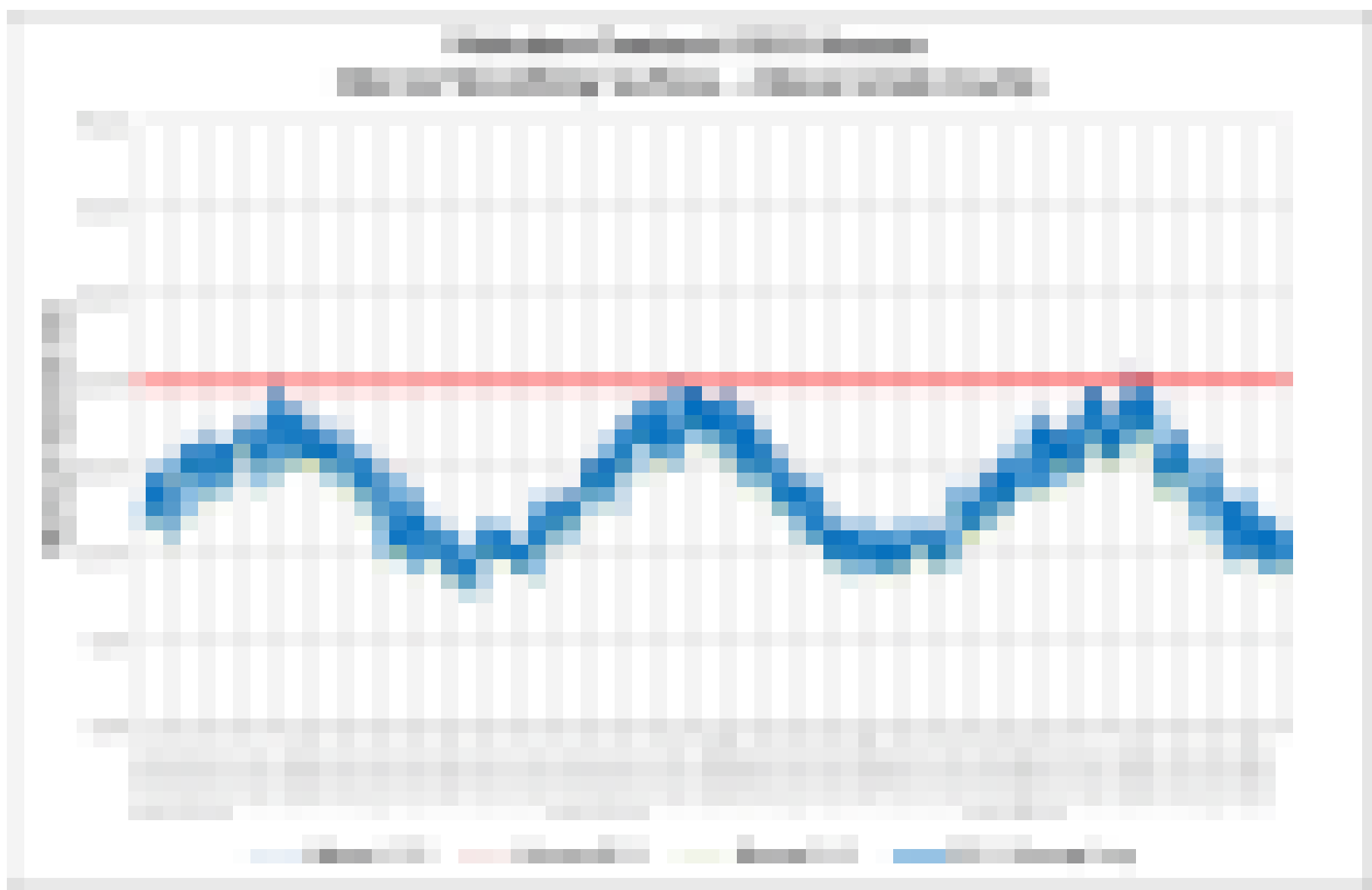
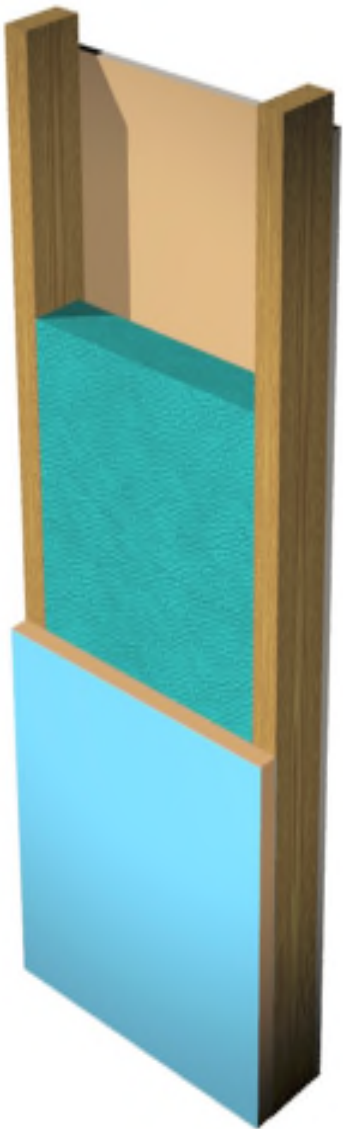


62-Kendall



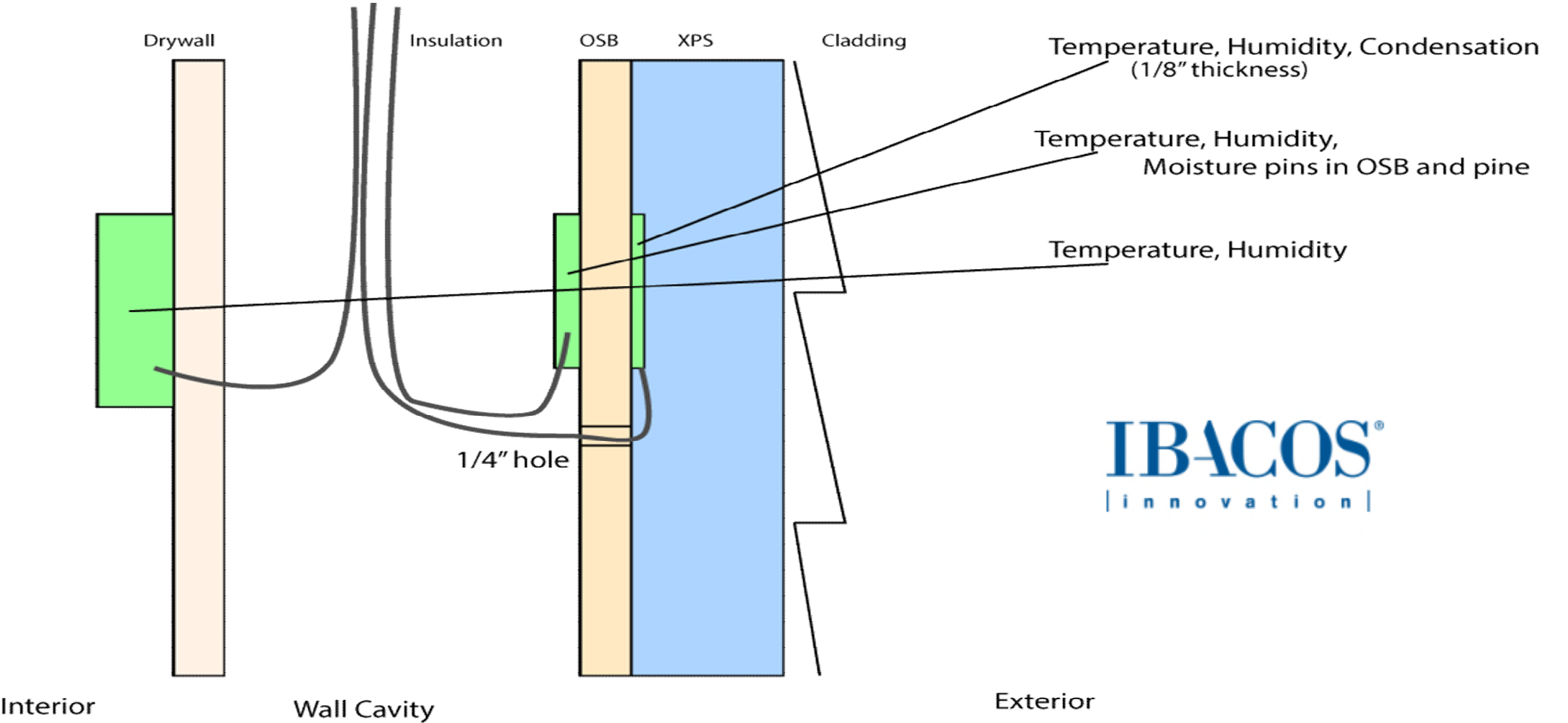
## Moisture Content - Housewrap Houses Interior Sheathing Surface - Above Grade Cavity







# AG Wall Sensors

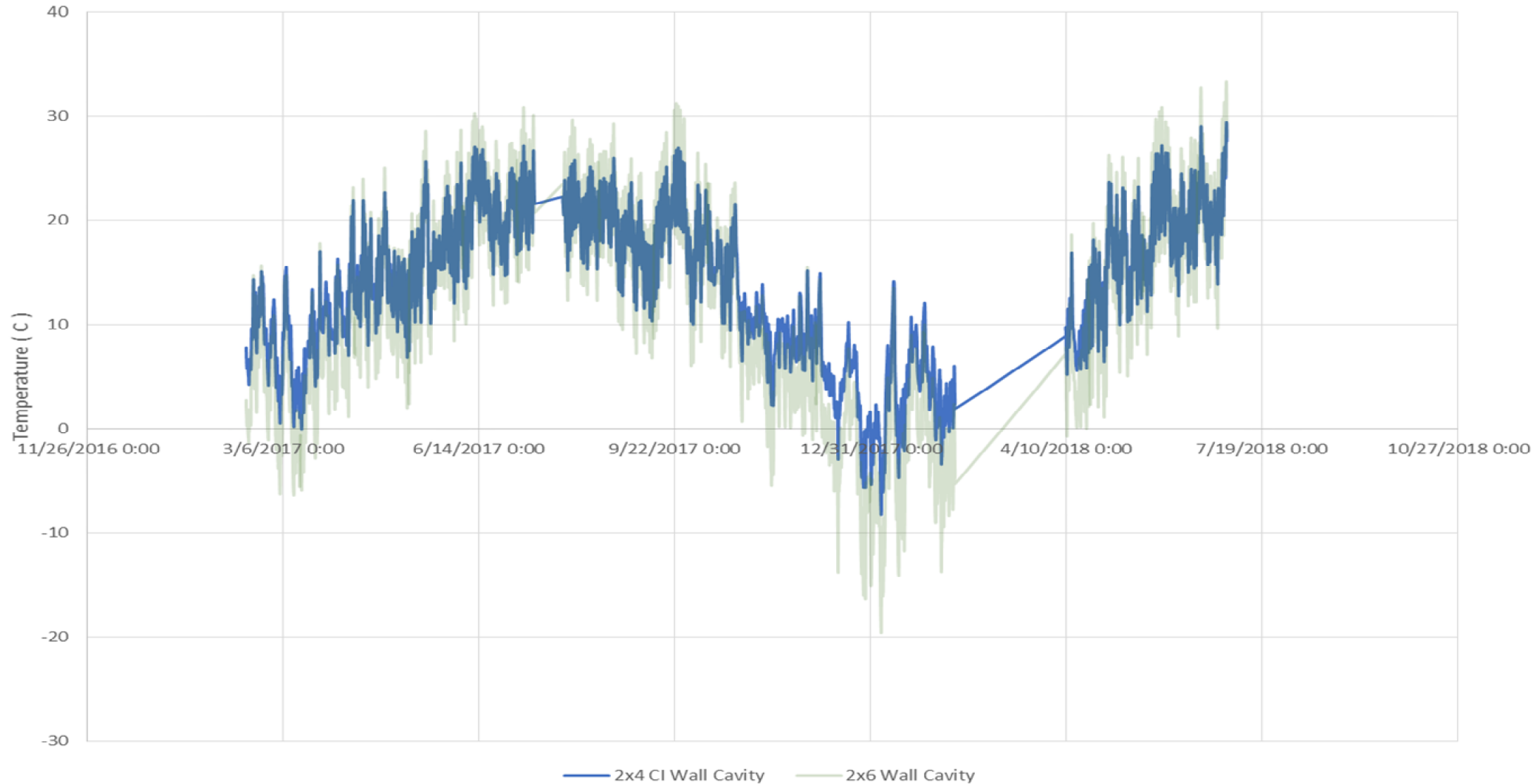


Home 1  
206F039B

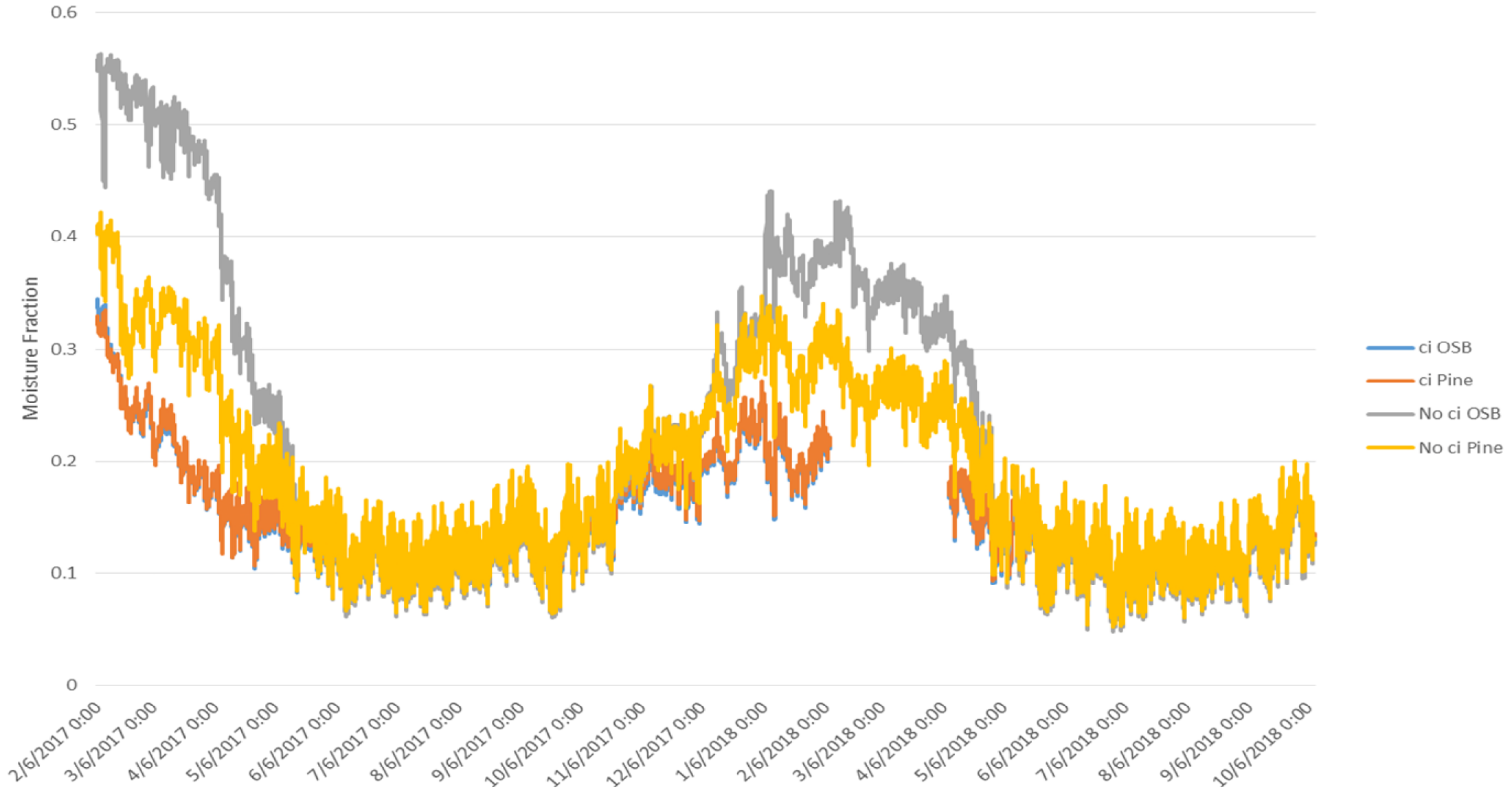
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Temperature  
2X4 CI and 2X6 Above Grade Walls

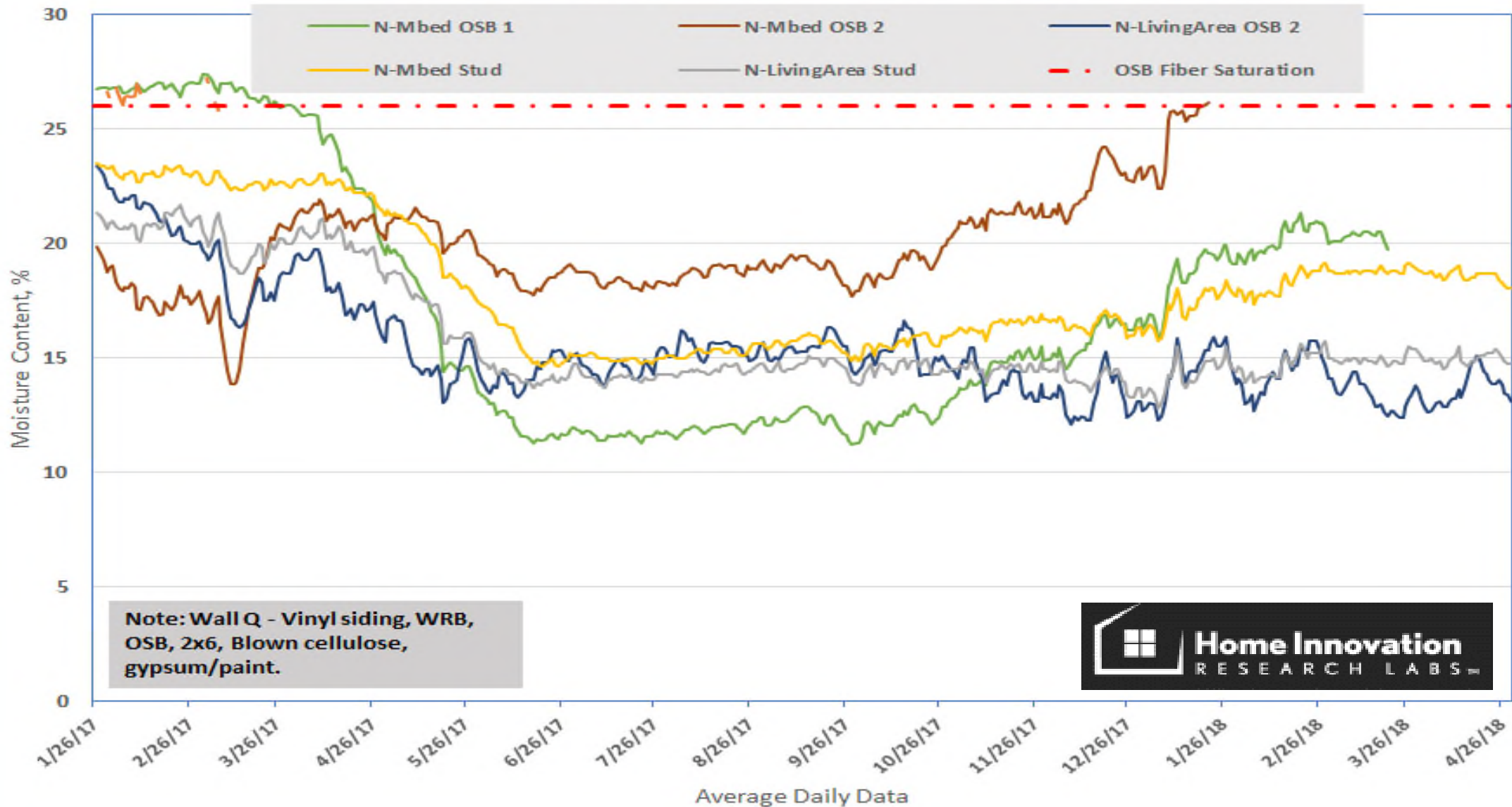


Moisture Fraction Interior Surface of OSB





## Climate Zone 5A - Michigan - House 14 - Wall Cavity Moisture Content

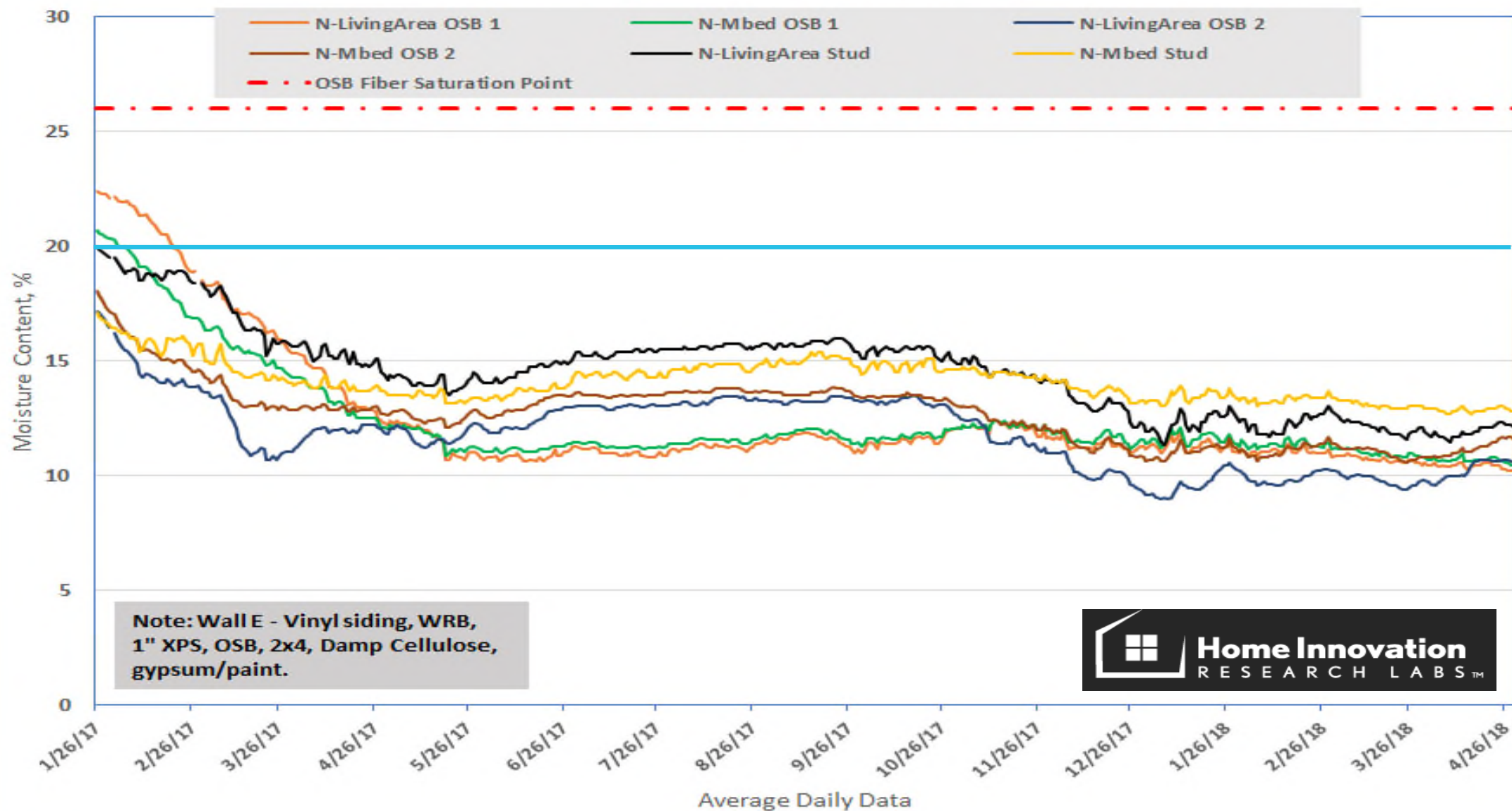




## Climate Zone 5A - Michigan - House 14 - Wall Cavity Moisture Content



## Climate Zone 5A - Michigan - House 4 - Wall Cavity Moisture Content







## RH Between OSB and ci or house wrap



ground will the fiber saturation point be reached. By itself, the water vapor in humid air will not wet wood sufficiently to support significant decay, but it will permit development of some mold fungi. Fully air-dried wood usually will have a moisture content not exceeding 20% and should provide a reasonable margin of safety against fungal damage. Thus,

**Wood Handbook, Forest Products Lab**

# Cost 2x4 ci vs. 2x6 Cavity only

			Building K		Building L	
			2x4 CI		2x6 HW	
	<u>Price</u>	<u>Unit</u>	<u>Q</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Q</u>	<u>Cost</u>
2x4 Bottom Plates	\$ 0.57	LFT	628	\$ 360.34	0	\$ -
2x4 Top Plates	\$ 0.31	LFT	1256	\$ 389.52	0	\$ -
2x6 Bottom Plates	\$ 0.75	LFT	0	\$ -	628	\$ 471.47
2x6 Top Plates	\$ 0.50	LFT	0	\$ -	1256	\$ 624.46
2x4 Studs	\$ 2.13	Each	567	\$ 1,210.13	0	\$ -
2x6 Studs	\$ 3.45	Each	0	\$ -	567	\$ 1,958.11
1" STYROFOAM Sheathing 4x8 material	\$ 0.57	SFT	5526	\$ 3,174.68	0	\$ -
Foam Sheathing Installation	\$ 0.10	SFT	5024	\$ 502.40		\$ -
Foam Sheathing Tape WRB material	\$ 17.00	Roll	9	\$ 156.30		\$ -
Foam Sheathing Tape WRB labor	\$ 0.05	LFT	1352	\$ 67.60		\$ -
Tyvek material	\$ 0.13	SFT		\$ -	5526	\$ 719.45
Tyvek labor	\$ 0.11	SFT		\$ -	5024	\$ 552.64
R-14 Damp spray cellulose (baseline)	\$ -	SFT	2999	\$ -		\$ -
R-21 Damp spray cellulose (premium)	\$ 0.23	SFT		\$ -	2999	\$ 689.77
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>\$ 5,860.98</b>		<b>\$ 5,015.90</b>
			<b>Per Building Premium for 2x4 ci</b>		<b>\$ 845.08</b>	
			<b>Per unit premium for 2x4 ci</b>		<b>\$ 140.85</b>	



# OSB strength loss (TEETH Project)

A piece of OSB is being kept in our conditioned lab for comparison with in situ OSB after 5-years.

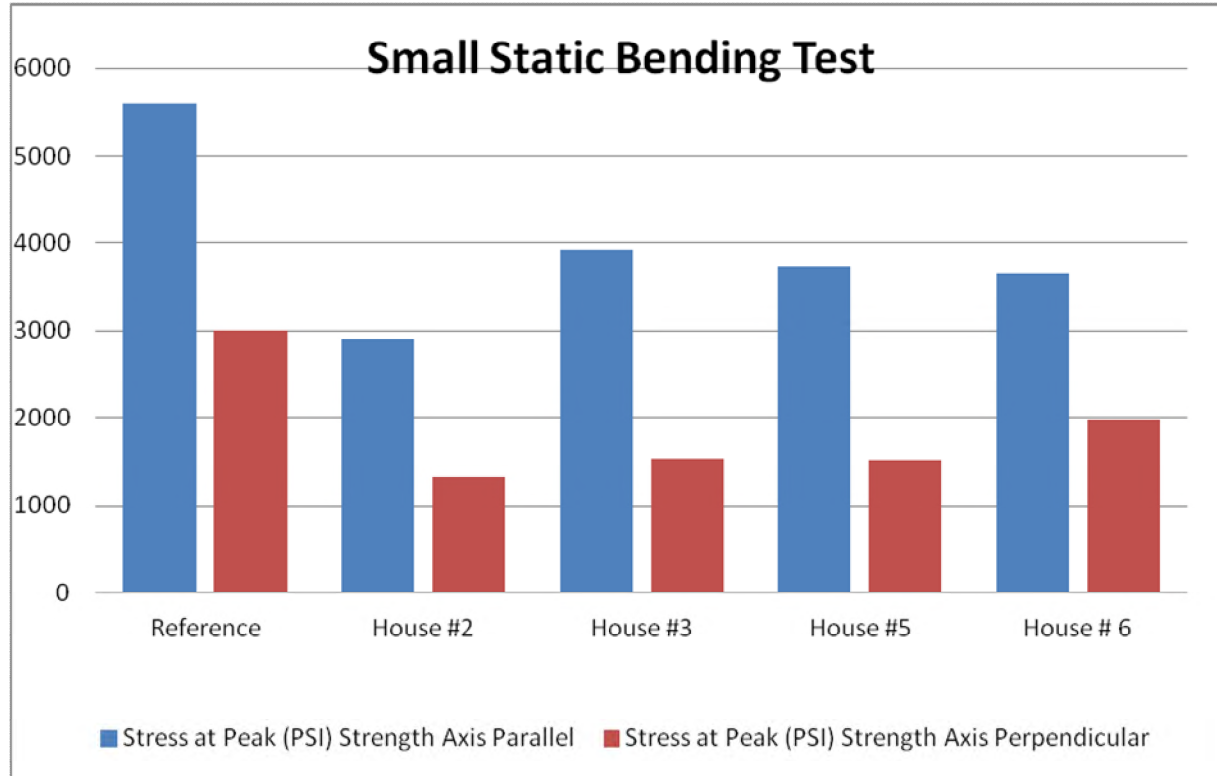
2011



2015

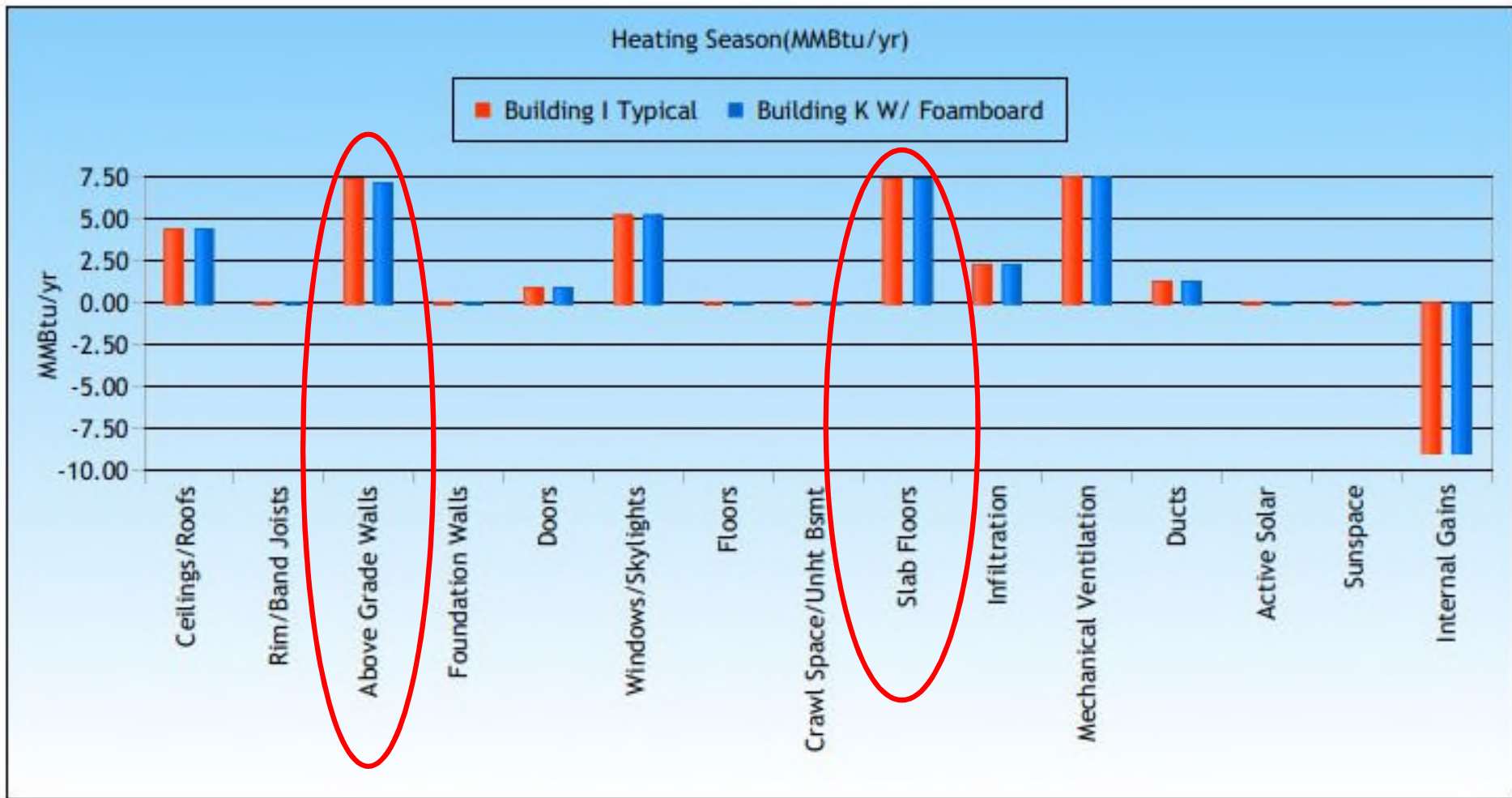


# OSB Strength Measurement after 4 years.



PS2 -  
Performance  
Standard for  
Wood-Based  
Structural  
Panels

4.5"x 14"  
ASTM D3043.  
Method D

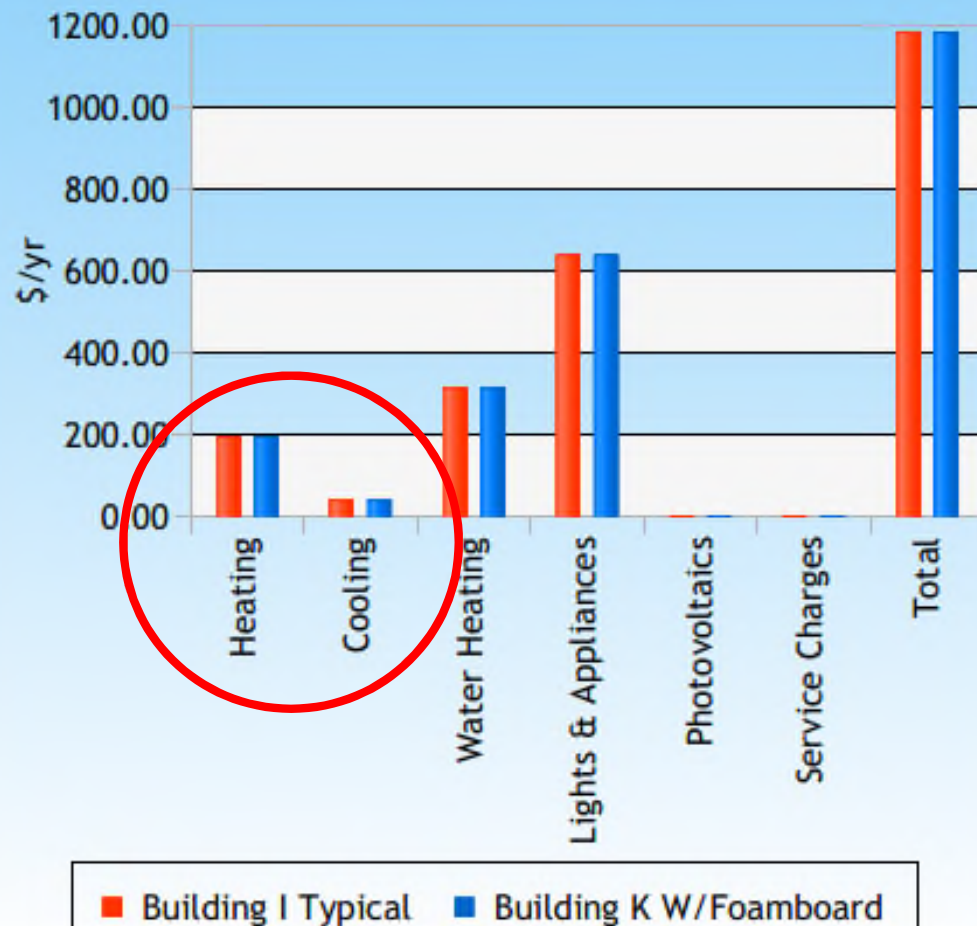


**REM/Rate - Residential Energy Analysis and Rating Software v15.4.1**  
This information does not constitute any warranty of energy cost or savings.  
© 1985-2017 Noresco, Boulder, Colorado.

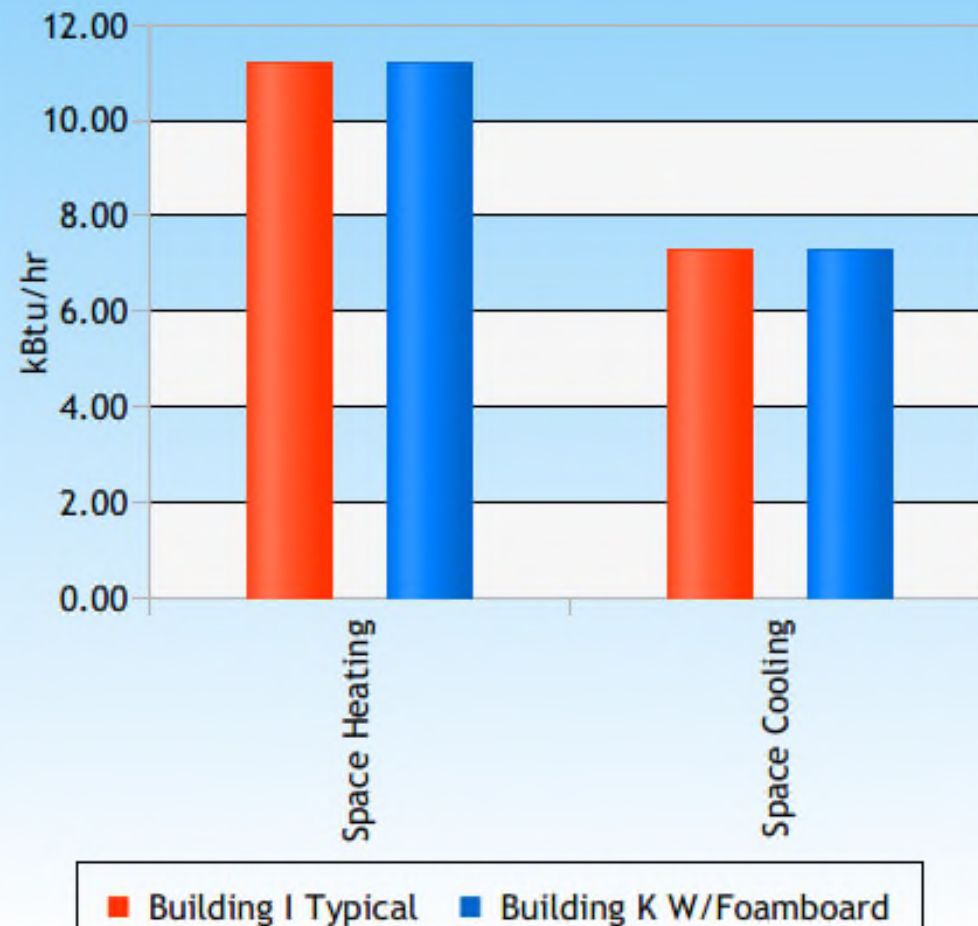
Page 1 of 2



## Annual Energy Cost



## Design Loads



# Wall Comparison Summary

## Learnings to Date

- The cost of the two strategies are very similar and will vary as prices fluctuate
- Continuous insulation reduces condensation potential
- XPS ci over OSB does not trap moisture



# Next Steps

- Began monitoring in 2017
- Plan to continue monitoring through 2022
- Plan to preform forensic investigation in 2022

# Thank You



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