

Porn industry asks health officials not to require condoms

18 February 2016, by John Rogers

Scores of porn actors, writers, directors and producers pleaded with state officials Thursday not to make them use condoms in films, saying such a move would criminalize and perhaps destroy their multibillion-dollar industry.

The state Division of Occupational Safety and Health's Standards Board was scheduled to vote later Thursday on a 21-page set of standards that would require, among other safety measures, that porn actors use condoms when they film sex scenes.

One after another, the people who work both in front of and behind the camera filed to the dais at a hearing room in Oakland, California, to tell the board that would be wrong.

Several said doing so would force the [industry](#) underground, prompting it to film in secret, which would essentially make all those involved criminals. They added it might also put an end to the industry's own requirement that actors be tested for [sexually transmitted disease](#) every 14 days.

"I ask you not to approve this policy that will endanger me and my colleagues," porn actress Maxine Holloway said during the hearing that continued for more than four hours.

Under the 21-page proposal the agency is considering, so-called engineering controls "such as condoms" must be used by actors engaging in sex to reduce the risk of transmitting HIV and other diseases.

Producers would also be required to pay for medical visits, treatments and other health-care costs for their performers.

Some speakers said that if the rules take effect, Cal/OSHA inspectors could also eventually begin ordering actors to use safety goggles and dental

dams.

"That's pure fantasy on their part," Michael Weinstein, head of the AIDS Healthcare Foundation, who has pushed Cal/OSHA for years to adopt workplace safety rules aimed specifically at the porn industry, said before the hearing.

Although the new provisions make no mention of goggles or dental dams, they do require that sex workers, like those in the medical industry, be sure their eyes are protected from being infected by blood-borne pathogens. Industry officials worry that, without goggles, that could put an end to oral sex scenes.

The AIDS Healthcare Foundation, which also had several former porn actors scheduled to speak at the hearing, said the condom requirement is long overdue. One of the scheduled speakers, Derrick Burts, said he became infected with HIV while making porn films.

"People have suffered serious consequences due to lack of regulation in this industry," Weinstein said.

Condoms are already required for films made in Los Angeles County, thanks to an AIDS Healthcare Foundation-sponsored ordinance that voters adopted in 2012.

Weinstein has complained that filmmakers, who sometimes work out of houses they rent for just a day are two, sometimes ignore that law.

Cal/OSHA could enforce its regulations with, among other things, the kind of workplace visits it requires of other industries.

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