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International Code Council Supports Legislation to Protect Copyright for Life Safety Codes

The bipartisan bill seeks to preserve development of codes and standards that promote community resilience, advance sustainability and protect public safety

Washington, D.C. – On February 18, 2022, Congressman Ted Deutch (D-FL) and Darrell Issa (R-CA) introduced bipartisan legislation – the Protecting and Enhancing Public Access to Codes Act – that will ensure that codes and standards developing organizations (SDOs) retain copyright for codes adopted or incorporated by reference into law, as long as they are made freely viewable online. Supported by a broad coalition of SDOs, this legislation will protect the system of codes and standards, including the International Codes (I-Codes), which create the safest and most sustainable and resilient buildings and communities in the world. The federal government, along with state, tribal, and territorial governments, rely on the I-Codes to advance important policies, such as reducing extreme weather risk, protecting building occupant health, and furthering climate change goals.

For more than a century, model codes and standards created by non-profit SDOs have served to protect public health, safety, and security; constituted a backbone of commerce; provided the building blocks for innovation; and served as the basis for quality and interoperability. The I-Codes are developed by the Code Council in conjunction with government and private entities. This system of code development provides the highest level of safety in the world and the integrity of the codes and standards depends on the protection of this system. These protections have been challenged in recent years by for-profit companies selling unpermitted copies of codes and standards the Code Council and other SDOs have developed.

“Copyright protection is critical to the continuation of an open, transparent and balanced system which has been highly effective in protecting public health and safety for decades,” said Code Council Chief Executive Officer Dominic Sims, CBO. “Without copyright protection for the codes and standards, government agencies would have to shoulder the expensive and complex tasks involved in replicating a system that is already serving the public well and costs taxpayers nothing.”

To develop codes and standards, SDOs log many thousands of person-hours compiling, editing, and distributing proposals, comments on drafts and modifications. For the Code Council, this process requires significant expenditures on IT infrastructure, workspace, and personnel to

enable no-cost, open/public participation, and remote voting for public officials across the country. SDOs support their codes and standards development activities through revenues made possible by the protection of copyright laws.

“Our codes are already freely viewable online because we want the building safety community as well as the public to have access to them,” stated Sims. “The I-Codes are currently protecting millions of lives around the world. It’s in everyone’s best interest to continue to protect the process that produces these codes and we’re thankful to the bill’s sponsors for their work.”

For more about copyright protection for building safety codes and standards visit our [resource page](#) or download the [Protect Copyrights For National Standards](#) fact sheet.

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About the International Code Council

The [International Code Council](#) is the leading global source of model codes and standards and building safety solutions. Code Council codes, standards and solutions are used to ensure safe, affordable and sustainable communities and buildings worldwide.