



ICC NEWS RELEASE

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The International Code Council and California Building Officials host important roundtable with leading seismic experts

Experts discussed various pathways to developing a nationally applicable approach to seismic functional recovery for new construction

Brea, Calif. – The International Code Council and California Building Officials (CALBO) hosted a [seismic roundtable](#) at the California State Capitol in Sacramento on July 25, 2019. The roundtable brought together more than 80 subject matter experts from the West Coast and across the U.S. to address the development of a nationally applicable approach to new buildings that allows them to not only withstand but function after an earthquake.

Participants of the discussion represented a diverse group with varied technical backgrounds, including the National Institute of Standards and Technology, the Earthquake Engineering Research Institute, Structural Engineers Association of California, Applied Technology Council, the Federal Emergency Management Agency and more. The roundtable facilitated communication and collaboration between organizations and representatives from local, state and federal agencies to better understand current initiatives and to effectively and efficiently determine a path to achieving functional recovery for new construction.

Functional recovery means that buildings are not only designed and constructed for life safety, but also to support the basic intended functions of the building's pre-earthquake use and occupancy within a maximum acceptable time. In other words, a building built for functional recovery would be able to be used for its intended purpose – whether that be eating, sleeping, shopping or learning – soon after an earthquake. This definition is based on [California Assembly Bill 393](#) which is currently going through the California legislature. This bill, if adopted into law, requires that the California Building Standards Commission assemble a working group to consider whether a “functional recovery” standard is warranted for all or some building occupancy classifications, and to investigate the practical means of implementing that standard by June 30, 2021.

Distinguished guest Assembly member Adrin Nazarian, representing the 46th California Assembly District, attended and formally addressed the group. “As the fifth largest economy in the world, California cannot hit the pause button after a massive earthquake,” said Assemblymember Nazarin. “It is our duty to ensure that we save lives and preserve property by making our buildings the strongest in the world, capable of surviving and thriving in the aftermath of an earthquake. We have the technology, we just need the will. I look forward to continuing to work with the International Code Council and CALBO to protect lives, our economy, and property as we cancel the coming catastrophe.”

“In light of the recent Searles Valley Earthquake, this roundtable could not be timelier. Thanks to the modern, up-to-date building codes in California, based on the model codes that the Code Council develops, the earthquake resulted in minor structural damage,” said Code Council Chief Executive Officer Dominic Sims, CBO. “The seismic roundtable in California is only the beginning as we work together to create the safest buildings and most resilient communities. The Code Council is hosting a series of events to build consensus on important building science and safety matters globally.”

“Functional recovery and seismic design are issues not limited to California code officials,” explained Sharon Goei, CALBO President and Director of Building and Housing for the City of Milpitas, California. “CALBO is pleased to partner with our structural and seismic safety counterparts in federal, regional, state and local government to ensure that we are leading the way in resiliency and preparatory efforts.”

A follow-up meeting is scheduled for the morning of October 23, 2019, at the [Code Council’s Annual Conference](#) in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Additional information:

- Presentation slides from the morning session are available at www.iccsafe.org/advocacy.
- Photos from the event are available [here](#).
- Listen to the ICC Pulse Podcast episode on seismic activity and the Searles Valley Earthquake featuring California structural engineer and President of the Structural Engineers Southern California, Ken O’Dell, S.E. [here](#).

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About the International Code Council

The [International Code Council](#) is a nonprofit association that provides a wide range of building safety solutions including product evaluation, accreditation, certification, codification and training. It develops model codes and standards used worldwide to construct safe, sustainable, affordable and resilient structures.