

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 1, 2022

Contact: Donna Campbell | (734) 660-6518

dcampbell@iccsafe.org | www.iccsafe.org**White House Announces National Initiative to Advance Building Codes Based on the International Codes***Expanded Use of I-Codes will help prevent loss of life and save tens of thousands of dollars in building losses and wasted energy*

Washington, D.C. – On June 1, 2022, the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Administrator Deanne Criswell announced a [National Initiative to Advance Building Codes](#), a new government-wide effort to boost national resiliency and reduce energy costs. Under the initiative U.S. federal departments and agencies will review federal funding and financing of building construction to ensure projects follow updated model codes and provide incentives and support for communities to adopt modern building codes. Members of the [Mitigation Framework Leadership Group \(MitFLG\)](#) will review their infrastructure grantmaking processes to ensure that they align with and support the adoption and use of current editions of the [International Residential Code \(IRC\)](#) and [International Building Code \(IBC\)](#). FEMA chairs the MitFLG, which consists of another 13 federal agencies, including the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Department of Energy (DOE), and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

The announcement is being made at the Florida International University Wall of Wind in Miami, Florida at the start of Atlantic hurricane season. In the aftermath of Hurricane Andrew, which struck south Florida nearly 30 years ago and resulted in 65 deaths and more than \$26 billion in damages, Florida significantly strengthened its building codes and enforcement practices. As a result, [according to FEMA](#), Florida's codes, which are based on the I-Codes, have prevented over \$1 billion in losses annually since 2000.

“By modernizing building codes, communities will not only save money through lower energy costs and protecting their property, but together, we will also save lives by ensuring our infrastructure remains resilient in the face of climate change and the associated extreme weather events,” said FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell. “Working with stakeholders like our partners at the International Code Council, we will leverage our collective knowledge and experience to bolster the adoption of the latest, current building codes and standards across this nation.”

Every year, the U.S. government spends hundreds of billions of dollars supporting building construction and retrofits through grants and other incentives. FEMA [views](#) the adoption of current building codes as the most effective means to enable communities to become more resilient to hurricanes, flooding, wildfires, and other natural hazards that are increasing in frequency and severity as a result of the changing climate. Yet, FEMA is currently the only U.S. federal agency that requires the construction it funds to adhere to current, hazard-resistant codes. FEMA is also the only U.S. federal agency that

incentivizes state, local, tribal, and territorial (SLTT) governments to adopt and effectively implement resilient codes through its infrastructure grants.

Under the new initiative, MitFLG agencies are charged with:

- Ensuring, to the extent feasible, that current programs funding and financing new and substantially rehabilitated homes and buildings follow current editions of relevant I-Codes, including, for example, the IRC, IBC, and [International Existing Building Code \(IEBC\)](#).
- Leveraging [\\$225 million in DOE funding](#) through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to support adoption and implementation of updated building energy codes, like the International [Energy Conservation Code \(IECC\)](#) and [International Green Construction Code \(IgCC\)](#).
- Providing incentives and support for SLTT governments to adopt and effectively implement modern building codes, including through outreach, education, and technical support efforts like those envisioned in FEMA's recently announced [Building Codes Strategy](#).
- Lead by example to pilot above-code resilience and energy conservation efforts across the U.S. federal building portfolio.

Requiring the current IBC and IRC prevents roughly \$14,000 in losses per building in jurisdictions where codes have not been updated in the past two decades, an [\\$11 to \\$1 return on investment](#) in many of these areas that will mitigate the loss of life and injuries, property damage, business interruptions, as well as first responder and annual homeownership costs. [According to FEMA](#), in recent years, 30% of new construction has taken place in these areas. [According to DOE](#), nearly half of states' residential energy codes are currently at least 15% less efficient than the 2021 IECC. [Per DOE](#), modern energy codes can save households an average of [\\$162 dollars each year](#) on utility bills. Without federal resilience and energy conservation requirements, federally-assisted construction defaults to locally adopted codes and standards.

"The Code Council commends the administration for leading by example through a comprehensive effort that will ensure federally-assisted construction is safer and more sustainable and will support communities in enhancing their resilience through the adoption and implementation of modern building codes," said Code Council Chief Executive Officer Dominic Sims, CBO. "This is about sound stewardship of federal investments. It's the first step towards breaking the cycle of damage and repair. And it will help assure communities across the country get the resources they need to strengthen construction in the face of growing hazard risk."

###

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.