



NEWS RELEASE

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Legislation to Support Building Safety Re-introduced

A federal grant program to assist communities across the country as they adopt and administer construction safety codes that protect property and the public has been re-introduced in the U.S. Congress with bipartisan support. The House passed a similar measure in the last legislative session, but the measure derailed as Congress turned its attention to battling the economic crisis.

“The aim of the program is to provide desperately needed resources to many vulnerable communities that do not have the trained personnel or tools to translate safety codes into compliance,” said International Code Council CEO Richard P. Weiland. “In too many communities, there simply aren’t enough resources for building safety. This legislation will provide the needed resources.”

New legislation (S 970) to establish a competitive grant program in the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to help local governments with enforcement of residential, building, fire, energy, plumbing and related codes was introduced in the U.S. Senate by Senators Mary Landrieu (D-LA), Mel Martinez (R-FL), Tim Johnson (D-SD) and Joe Lieberman (I-CT). A companion bill (HR 2246) was introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives by Representatives Dennis Moore (D-KS), Judy Biggert (R-IL) and Dina Titus (D-NV).

“The measure’s sponsors could not have offered a more fitting tribute to code officials during Building Safety Week 2009,” said Adolf Zubia, the Council’s Board President and Las Cruces, New Mexico, Fire Chief. “The grant will support the vital role code enforcement plays to protect the public through implementation of building and fire safety.”

The Community Building Code Administration Grant Act authorizes \$20 million annually from 2010 to 2014 for the grant program. For every \$1 the federal government spends on enforcement of federal standards on mitigation and flood elevations, taxpayers save nearly \$4 in

disaster assistance costs. A study by the World Watch Institute said that every dollar spent on disaster mitigation and preparedness saves \$7 in disaster-related economic loss. Other economic benefits of building to the latest codes can include energy savings, reduced maintenance costs, lower insurance premiums and fewer safety concerns.

“We salute the Senators and Representatives who introduced the measure in the Senate and House that will benefit public safety, and governments and property owners who bear the costs to recover from disasters,” Weiland said.

In addition to the International Code Council, other supporters of the grant include the American Institute of Architects, the American Society of Civil Engineers, the International Fire Code Council, the Alliance to Save Energy and the National Institute of Building Sciences.

The International Code Council, a membership association dedicated to building safety and fire prevention, develops the codes used to construct residential and commercial buildings, including homes and schools. Most U.S. cities, counties and states choose the International Codes, building safety codes developed by the International Code Council.

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