



ICC NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Steve Dagers
1-888-ICC-SAFE (422-7233), ext. 4212
(708) 351-8880 (cell)

Coalition's Congressional Testimony Advocates for Financial Incentive to Adopt, Enforce Building Codes

To help communities recover from major natural disasters while saving taxpayers money, the [International Code Council](http://www.iccsafe.org) helped draft testimony that was submitted to the U.S. Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs [Subcommittee on Disaster Recovery and Intergovernmental Affairs](#), and the U.S. House Transportation and Infrastructure [Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management](#). The testimony was submitted on behalf of the [BuildStrong Coalition](#) which is made up of the Code Council and more than two dozen other organizations. The Coalition is urging Congress to pass the Safe Building Code Incentive Act (H.R. 2069) that would create a financial incentive for states that have adopted and enforced statewide building codes.

"Overwhelming evidence exists to demonstrate that the adoption and enforcement of building codes save lives and greatly reduce property damage and the need for federal assistance resulting from disasters," Code Council CEO Richard P. Weiland said. "We cannot stress enough the importance to public safety for all communities to adopt and enforce model building codes, not to mention the economic benefits."

Under the proposed legislation, states that adopt and enforce recognized model building codes for residential and commercial structures would qualify for an additional 4 percent of funding available for post-disaster grants.

Sixteen states currently enforce building codes that would already qualify for the additional 4 percent funding. Another 15 states would qualify with minor changes to current laws and regulations.

The testimony also cited studies that demonstrate:

- A four-fold return for dollars spent on actions to reduce disaster losses and damage;

- Adopting and enforcing newer codes can reduce losses by 40 percent or more;
- Severe natural catastrophes have already made 2011 the highest loss year on record globally;
- In the United States, 100 events in the first half of 2011 produced overall losses well above the 10-year average; and
- Relatively simple upgrades in construction such as strapping to create a continuous load path from the roof through the walls and into the foundation, along with thicker roof decking, and textured rather than smooth nails, can result in a home withstanding 110 mile-per-hour winds with little damage compared to test homes with the same floor plan that were not upgraded and completely destroyed by wind speeds of only 95 to 100 mile-per-hour.

While mitigation will not prevent natural catastrophes, the Coalition testified, stronger homes and businesses will save private property, federal funds, environmental damage and insurance claims paid. Building codes contribute to the resiliency of a community and the ability of a community to “bounce-back” from a hazard event.

For more information about the bill, including its status, and a way to easily contact Congress to demonstrate your support, go to CapWiz.com/lccSafe/Home/.

The [International Code Council](#) is a member-focused association dedicated to helping the building safety community and construction industry provide safe, sustainable and affordable construction through the development of codes and standards used in the design, build and compliance process. Most U.S. communities and many global markets [choose the International Codes](#).

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