

## **Statement of the International Code Council (ICC)**

Thank you for the opportunity to be here before you today.

I would like to commend you, Madame Chair and the entire Housing and Buildings Committee for holding this hearing. I also thank Patricia Lancaster and her staff for the open and inclusive process she developed and implemented to carry out the New York City Model Code Program.

The ICC was honored in May of 2003 when a Commission representing the design, labor and construction community of the City selected the IBC after it and the NFPA 5000 were extensively evaluated to determine which would best

the committees with code books, support documentation and other materials as requested.

Although the amendment process for each jurisdiction is different, the

resulting consensus is consistent with the democratic process in which our federal, state and local laws are drafted, revised and finalized.

Anyone, ICC member or not, can submit a code change proposal, make a public comment and participate in the debate on any proposed change to the model code. Likewise, anyone can appeal an action or inaction of a code committee to ICC's publicly elected Board of Directors.

The ICC code development process follows this cycle:

1. Code changes are submitted
2. Code changes are printed, distributed and available on-line
3. An open public hearing is held
4. Public hearing results are printed and distributed and available on-line
5. Public comments are sought on public hearing results
6. Public comments are printed and distributed and available on-line
7. A Final action hearing is held
8. Supplements or new editions of the Codes are published that include all changes receiving a positive final action vote.

The I-Codes are the leading edge of building technology and firefighter safety. The safety of the public, of the fire services and of emergency personnel is always a priority in the I-Codes. Since first written, the I-Codes have incorporated the highest level requirements for the protection of first responders. These requirements include access routes for fire department equipment and personnel, designed-in protection for firefighters, including smoke and heat vents, shaft reinforcement and protection, basement sprinklers, fire command centers, and fire-safety elevator features. These are only a few of the provisions in the International Codes that specifically address the critical needs of firefighter safety.

It is notable that the first of the code councils formed by the ICC was the International Fire Code Council. This group, made up of 16 active fire service professionals, assures that the interests and needs of firefighters are addressed at every level. The IFCC is responsible for appointments to the

International Fire Code Development Committee, along with fire service appointments to a number of other Code Development Committees, including the International Existing Building Code Committee, the Fire Safety Committee for the IBC, and the International Building Performance Code Committee.

No other code development organization is structured to provide those in the fire services with this high level of access and influence of the regulations that ultimately affect firefighters and those they protect.

By using the IBC as the framework for its construction code, the City of New York will enter into a partnership with ICC that gives the City its own “ownership” of the IBC. As it does now, the City of New York will continue to control its building code and will continue to control the process by which it adopts and amends that code now and in the future. The I-Codes are living documents, revised on an 18 month cycle with the new codes published every 3 years. This process provides each jurisdiction with a regular means for renewal and improvement of its code, but it will be always be this Council’s decision whether to adopt any future changes or amendments to the model code.

As an owner of and partner in the development of the I-Codes and governance of the ICC, the City, based on its population, will appoint delegates to vote in the national code development process and will be able to participate in governing the affairs of the ICC. Any City agencies, departments or units engaged in the administration, formulation or enforcement of the code will be able to participate in the development process.

technologies, participating in and staying current on construction code changes thus better serving themselves, their employers and the community.

By using the IBC as its model, staff employed by the City can easily update any in-house training materials and administrative forms. To do so, your personnel can simply work with the same personnel at ICC that they work with on code interpretations, product evaluations and other technical issues.

Adoption of the I-Codes will align the city with surrounding jurisdictions and with the rest of the country. The City will build upon a common code format used throughout the country.

Building safety clearly depends on more than written codes and standards.



functions that ultimately rest with those enforcing the code under their approval authority and are a part of the code compliance process.

ICC Evaluation Service (ICC-ES) provides assurance that building products and technology meet building code provisions. The introduction of new construction technology does not usually coincide with the publication of new building safety codes and standards. Consequently, ICC-ES provides “alternative materials, design and methods of construction” as the basis for new building technology that is not specifically covered in the codes and standards.

In this global and competitive world, it is important to have an international presence in order to facilitate the use of American technology and products. ICC has an international program that is designed to foster increased U.S. communication with other countries on building construction regulations and to assist in the development, adoption and enforcement of building regulations. Through this program, the I-Codes have already been adopted in the Virgin Islands; and Jamaica is in the process of reviewing their adoption. The ICC has also been called upon to host foreign delegations of building industry representatives and government officials as additional countries examine utilizing an internationally recognized building code.

The IBC is the only building code under consideration at this hearing that meets or exceeds Fair Housing Accessibility Guidelines; designated “safe harbor” by HUD as meeting FHAG requirements for builders and helps ensure that new apartments and condominiums are accessible to people with disabilities. The ICC code requirements for housing accessibility were developed through a cooperative effort led by the National Association of Home Builders and ICC. This effort also included HUD, building industry representatives and disability rights groups.

This concludes my remarks. Thank you again, for the opportunity to make this presentation today. I will be glad to answer any questions.