

Statement of

International Code Council (ICC)

On

**“The Investigation of the World Trade Center Collapse:
Findings, Recommendations and Next Steps”**

**Submitted for the record of the hearing before the
Committee on Science
U.S. House of Representatives
May 1, 2002**

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The International Code Council (ICC) appreciates the opportunity to submit this written statement into the record of the hearing on “The Investigation of the World Trade Center Collapse: Findings, Recommendations and Next Steps,” held on May 1, 2002 by the House Science Committee.

Comments on the proposed legislation “National Construction Safety Team Act” will be submitted under separate cover to all members of the House Science Committee.

Comments on Findings and Recommendations

fails another will withstand, the question arises whether the codes would ever be able to protect buildings against malicious scenarios such as acts of terrorism or war. The code development community has begun deliberating and considering all of the options available, cautiously analyzing the technical, economical, and human factors associated with the feasibility of strengthening buildings.

ICC Support

ICC supports the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) response plan and looks forward to working closely with that agency.

Code Development in the United States

Construction in the U.S. is a sophisticated process governed by codes and standards that regulate building, plumbing, gas, mechanical, electrical, energy, fire, accessibility and other specialized aspects of construction. The code development process is a dynamic process involving constant interaction between the private and public sectors of the construction industry, Federal, state and local governments.

The code development process in the U.S. is a private sector activity. ICC is a fully self-supporting nonprofit organization. The revenues used to develop and publish the codes are generated from its member organizations.

The code development process used to develop the International Codes is known as a governmental consensus process. It is an open, inclusive, and balanced consensus process with built-in safeguards to prevent domination by any single interest.

Model construction codes are developed to be adopted by reference into Federal, state or local laws. They are developed in the same manner as local governments are required to develop laws. It is a transparent and open process. There must be a guarantee of fairness in the process, of no conflicts of interest, and with no vested economic interest in the outcome of the final vote. The code officials represent local government agencies and their interest is the safety and well being of the public. The process incorporates a number of checks and balances to ensure the final documents are of the highest quality and reflect the latest technology.

This system of code development has ensured the citizens of the U.S. the highest level of building safety in the world as witnessed by the performance of the World Trade Center.

Participants in the process include code officials, other government regulatory agencies, academia, building owners, insurance companies, builders, manufacturers, testing laboratories and others. Participation in the ICC code development process is encouraged and is open to all groups and individuals.

Enforcement of Building Regulations

The enforcement of building regulations in the U.S. is the role of state and local government. This enforcement authority is derived from the 10th

Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, which gives states the right to legislate for the protection of the public health, safety, and welfare.

The family of International Codes developed by ICC includes building, fuel gas, energy conservation, fire, mechanical, plumbing, property maintenance, private sewage disposal, residential construction, zoning, urban-wildland interface, existing buildings, and a performance code. When a community adopts the International Codes it also benefits from the expertise of hundreds of technical staff, as well as established services that support the codes such as training and certification programs.

In a study conducted by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) in 1988, approximately 97% of cities, counties and states that have adopted and are enforcing building and safety codes are using documents developed by the statutory members of ICC. For more information on the International Codes adoptions by state or local jurisdictions, please visit the ICC website at www.intlcode.org.

The International Codes unified system provides substantial benefits to stakeholders who can now work with a consistent set of requirements throughout the United States. A unified system enhances economic development through the utilization of state-of-the-art technology in materials research, design and construction practices. A streamlined building regulatory system through a single family of codes brings consistency and compatibility to multiple layers of requirements existing at all levels of government. One system permits manufacturers to put their efforts into research and development, thus advancing innovation through performance based provisions that require consistent and predictable levels of building performance and safety.

OMB A-119 and PL 104-113

In 1996 the House Science Committee had the wisdom to pass the National Technology Transfer and Advancement Act (NTTAA), PL 104-113. PL 104-113 codified the OMB Circular A-119, Federal Participation in the Development and Use of Voluntary Consensus Standards and in Conformity

ICC supports this government policy. For many years the standards developing organizations have been encouraging Federal agencies to