International Code Council Testifies Before the U.S. House's Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure on Resilient Building Codes

The emergency management subcommittee hearing considers the importance of building code adoption and implementation in mitigating hazards to the built environment

Washington D.C. – On Wednesday, September 25, 2024, at 10 AM ET, International Code Council Past Board President Cindy Davis testified before Congress on the importance of building safety code adoption to boost community resilience. Her testimony was presented to the Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings and Emergency Management in conjunction with its hearing titled *Examining the Role and Effectiveness of Building Codes in Mitigating Against Disasters*.

Davis detailed the Code Council's long-time and ongoing efforts to ensure the Code Council's model codes (the International Codes®, or I-Codes) integrate the latest hazard resistant designs, best practices and lessons learned post disaster. She outlined studies confirming that the adoption and implementation of current model building codes are central to creating effective mitigation strategies for lessening the impacts of natural hazards, including hurricanes, flooding, hail, earthquakes, tornados and wildfires. Additionally, she shared that contemporary research continues to find that modern model building codes have no appreciable implications for housing affordability.

"From its earliest days, the Code Council has emphasized the importance of hazard mitigation within the codes and standards it develops," said Cindy Davis, CBO. "The Code Council welcomes the longstanding, bipartisan recognition of codes' value and encourages continued federal support for their greater use to protect communities across the U.S. from growing hazard risk."

Davis encouraged support for Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)'s Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) Codes Plus Up program, which recognized that BRIC's prior structure was preventing its broader use for code improvements. Code investments

represent less than two hundredths of a percent of BRIC's spending, for an activity that FEMA views as one of, if not the most impactful, community mitigation measures. She also supported changes to the BRIC scoring criteria that better recognized local efforts to integrate resilient codes, which the Code Council supports. Finally, she encouraged implementation of a cost share adjustment to support states adopting impactful and cost saving resilience measures.

"Strong building codes save lives and protect property," said Russell Strickland, Maryland Sec. of Emergency Management. "Moreover, the research is clear that building code adoption and enforcement are among the most cost-effective measures that governments can enact."

Finally, she encouraged the Committee to ensure that federal codes policy remains focused on codes that are resilient, consensus-based, correlated and cost effective, expressing concern over an unnecessary expansion of FEMA's code recognitions to the thousands of codes developed in the U.S.

"To date, federal efforts have appropriately focused on the codes and standards – including the I-Codes and many others – that are comprehensive and have demonstrated mitigation benefits," said Cindy Davis, CBO. "That needs to continue. We should not be handing out participation trophies when it comes to building safety and community resilience."

The I-Codes are a comprehensive set of model codes that are regularly updated through a rigorous, transparent and democratic process and are currently adopted in all 50 U.S. states. These codes are cost effective and help support building safety and resiliency in communities around the world. Communities that adopt and enforce up-to-date building codes are more resilient when faced with disasters.

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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.