

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, according to an International Code Council press release.

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.

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 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, ICC said. Other economic benefits of building to the latest codes can include energy savings, reduced maintenance costs, lower insurance premiums and fewer safety concerns, Stated ICC.

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 reported ICC.