

Proposed Resolution Supporting The Community Building Code Administration Grant Act

Issue: Authorization of a grant program through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to promote and support the enhancement of local building and fire code enforcement.

Proposed policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) supports enactment and funding of the Community Building Code Administration Grant Act so long as it does not supersede local regulation.

Background: On December 12, 2007 the Community Building Code Administration Grant Act of 2007 (CBCAG) was introduced in Congress. The purpose of this legislation is authorization of a grant program dedicated solely to stimulating and supporting local programs to enhance capabilities in building and fire code administration.

The local and national impacts of the hurricane seasons of 2004 and 2005, the flooding in 2006, and the tornado and wildfire seasons of 2006 and 2007 have clearly shown our nations' on-going and increasing vulnerability to natural hazards. These events have also clearly demonstrated the need for heightened federal action in aiding local governments in the execution of programs to better protect residents from natural hazards and to mitigate the potential for damage from future storms. The magnitude of the resulting damage has drawn attention to the need for resources dedicated to supporting and enhancing the work of local building and fire code enforcement authorities. Though most jurisdictions have modern, nationally recognized and widely adopted model building codes in force, code adoption must be coupled with effective capabilities and programs in local code administration. As a competitive grant program the CBCAG will support long-lasting improvements in capabilities in communities ready to sustain a program of dedicated and professional code enforcement. The CBCAG will serve local needs, provide local benefits and, in the long-run, will function to reduce burdens on national taxpayers.

The national benefits of federal programs to reduce the impact of natural events on the built environment were recently scientifically measured by the National Institute of Building Sciences (NIBS) in a congressionally mandated report. The NIBS report, entitled *Natural Hazard Mitigation Saves: An Independent Study to Assess the Future Savings from Mitigation Activities*, examined 10 years of FEMA mitigation grants, and that for each \$1.00 spent on mitigation, a present value of \$3.65 was saved by reduction of future expenses in disaster response and recovery. Enhancement of local capabilities in the enforcement of modern building codes is critical to a community's ability to best survive and recover from natural disasters. As this report points out, support for such mitigation is in our country's best interest as well.

Fiscal Urban/Rural Impacts: The CBCAG Act is dedicated to supporting local building and fire code administration, allowing urban and rural jurisdictions to undertake programs to increase capabilities in this area without competing for funds already targeted for other local needs and purposes. The legislation scales local match rates to local conditions, and includes conditions under which the match may be waived.

Submitted by: Jefferson County Commissioner, Kathy Hartman & Adams County Commissioner, Skip Fischer