**Proposed Resolution to the Congressional Fire Services Institute
National Advisory Committee:
Improved Standards, Technology and Practices
for Buildings and First Responders**

The collapse of the World Trade Center (WTC) and the continuing threats of terrorism highlight the critical and urgent need to disseminate immediate guidance and tools to assess and reduce future vulnerabilities, and to provide a technical foundation that supports improvements to building and fire codes, standards, and practices that reduce the impact of extreme threats to the safety of buildings, their occupants and emergency responders.

A technical investigation to establish more firmly the probable technical causes of the collapse of WTC 1, 2, and 7 has been undertaken by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), which anticipates completing its report before the end of 2004.

Codes, standards and practices that the investigation reveals to be in need of change will be identified in the report; however, the pace at which needed changes can be implemented will depend upon a base of knowledge and state of technology that are significantly greater than now exist.

To remedy this, NIST has proposed a research and development plan that involves experimentation, analysis, testing, verification and demonstration of improved tools to guide the building and fire safety industries, and to support the voluntary consensus process that is used to improve building and fire codes and standards in the U.S.

Research will be undertaken to better understand structural fire safety and the prevention of progressive collapse; building vulnerability reduction from chemical and biological attack; equipment standards for first responders; and human behavior, emergency response and mobility. The fruits of the research will be applicable to the built environment in general.

The President's budget for FY 2004 includes an additional $4 Million for NIST's Building and Fire Research Laboratory – which, if supported and passed by Congress, will go a long way towards ensuring that the needed improvements in safety are identified in a timely manner.

Implementation of the recommendations resulting from this program will help:
- restore public confidence in tall buildings by making buildings safer nationwide,
- enhance the safety of fire and emergency responders,
- better protect building occupants and property in the future, and
- develop and disseminate guidance and tools, assess and reduce vulnerabilities, and produce the technical basis for needed changes in national practices and standards.

Therefore, the National Association of State Fire Marshals strongly urges the Congressional Fire Service Caucus, the Congressional Fire Service Institute and the member Fire Service Organizations to actively support the President's Budget Request to permit NIST's Building and Fire Research Laboratory to pursue its efforts to complete the analysis of the WTC collapse and to report on the resultant changes needed to improve the safety of our buildings and protect both our firefighters and building occupants.