

A resolution recognizing that up-to-date national, consensus-based, building codes promote fire and life safety while supporting housing choice and affordability

Offered by:
International Code Council
National Fire Protection Association

WHEREAS, increases in housing costs have the greatest implications for low- and moderate-income (LMI) families;

WHEREAS, LMI families are more likely to live in homes built in hazard-prone areas or homes with lower quality construction and are therefore at greater risk of damage to or destruction of their homes;

WHEREAS, less than 4 in 10 Americans can cover an unanticipated \$1,000 expense with savings;

WHEREAS, some have contended that building codes are regulatory barriers to affordable housing and that building codes can present inherent barriers to fair housing choice;

WHEREAS, contemporary research continues to find that modern national, consensus-based, building codes have no appreciable implications for housing affordability—in fact, no peer-reviewed research has found otherwise;

WHEREAS a recent study by the Congressionally-established National Institute of Building Science found that using the latest codes and standards provides a benefit of \$11 for every \$1 invested through earthquake, flood, and wind mitigation benefits, with a \$4 to \$1 wildfire mitigation benefit, representing avoided casualties, property damage, business interruptions, urban search and rescue costs, loss of service from damaged fire stations and other public buildings, and insurance costs;

WHEREAS, modern codes require smoke alarms and fire sprinklers, which can reduce insurance premiums and injuries and loss of life;

WHEREAS the insurance savings from meeting current codes' flood mitigation requirements can reduce homeowners' net monthly mortgage and flood insurance costs by at least 5 percent;

WHEREAS, Congress and the Administration, including the Mitigation Framework Leadership Group, Federal Emergency Management Agency, and Department of Housing and Urban Development, support the adoption and enforcement of current national, consensus-based, building codes through grants, incentives, and technical support;

WHEREAS, zoning codes, which have been used to establish material and occupancy preferences, have been inappropriately conflated with building codes, which are material neutral, and which do not address occupancy preferences;

WHEREAS, a more unified code landscape would help minimize construction cost (and therein promote fair housing choice and affordable housing) through clearer and more consistent design

and construction requirements and quality standards—allowing greater efficiencies for builders, materials manufacturers, and designers; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Congressional Fire Services Institute:

1. Supports federal legislation, funding, and policies that recognize and support up-to-date national, consensus-based, building codes as promoting fair housing choice and affordable housing, and does not support actions to the contrary.