

BY RON BURTON

BOMA SUCCESS AT ICC CODE DEVELOPMENT HEARINGS



The International Code Council (ICC) held final action public hearings to determine the content of the 2015 editions of the ICC Fire, Energy Conservation, Existing Buildings, Property Maintenance and Residential codes on Oct. 2-10, 2013, in Atlantic City, N.J. BOMA's code advocacy team successfully represented the interests of BOMA members, participating in the debate on more than 800 code change proposals and securing approval of our positions on the most critical issues to BOMA members.

BOMA and its allies were successful in convincing ICC's voting members to **disapprove** unnecessary and costly mandates on new and existing buildings, including:

1. *Existing Buildings & Property Maintenance Codes:*

- Certificate of occupancy renewal every five years.

- Mold inspection and remediation of all existing buildings.
- Radon abatement system installation triggered by renovation permits.
- Expansion of the definition of "building owner" to include building operators and managers, and placing significant liabilities on BOMA members.
- Mandatory permits for maintenance functions, such as plumbing fixture replacement and sprinkler repairs.
- Retroactive extensive carbon monoxide detector installation in all medical office buildings and any residential occupancies within buildings.

2. *Fire Code:*

- Re-inspection of fire safety systems every five years, plus additional fees to fund inspector certification programs.
- Retroactive compliance with current fire code and accessibility provisions in existing buildings.

- Retroactive sprinkler system installation for all business occupancies over three stories.
- Elevator emergency recall and operation retrofits for all buildings less than 55 feet in height.
- Installation of costly firefighter air breathing replenishment systems (this was defeated in the body of the code, but was added to the appendix, meaning it will be left to each jurisdiction when adoption of the 2015 codes is considered).

3. *Energy Code:*

- Retro-commissioning for energy and mechanical systems in existing buildings every five years.
- Inspection of existing building compliance with current energy code requirements triggered by any permit application.
- Solar-ready provisions, including dedicated roof space, for all buildings.
- Increased new construction insulation levels for wall, floor, roof and windows.



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- Whole-building air barrier testing.
- Auto shut-off controls for 50 percent of electrical receptacles.
- Mandatory reduced lighting power in unoccupied stairways and garages, which would have created potential tenant safety issues.
- Extensive installation of electric- and water-metering devices.

BOMA also secured approval of energy code proposals to add trade-off options for compliance calculations, and an exemption to envelope air barrier requirements for sprinkler heads and other system elements.

Despite BOMA's efforts, action on some proposals resulting in negative impacts on commercial buildings was taken, including:

- Defeat of a proposal allowing elimination of fire extinguishers in fully sprinklered buildings.
- Disapproval of a relaxation of minimum wall insulation and window efficiencies.
- Increased stringency of computer room equipment minimum efficiency levels.
- Mandatory installation of automatic garage ventilation controls.
- Installation of new construction fire alarm and detection systems upon any change of occupancy.
- Increased hot water piping insulation levels, plus limits on piping lengths.

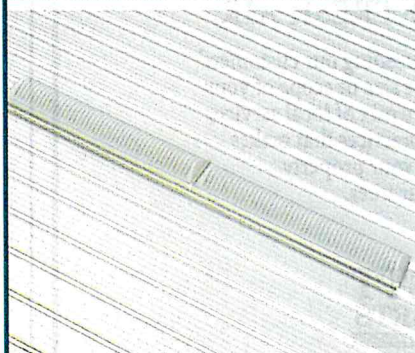
The hearings marked the end of the ICC code development process for all 2015 ICC codes, except the *International Green Construction Code (IgCC)*. Finalization of the Building, Mechanical and Plumbing codes was completed in 2012, and proposals to modify the IgCC will be debated and balloted in 2014.

2014 also marks the initiation of ICC's revised code development process, which will allow online collaboration on proposal development and remote voting on final actions by ICC's voting members. Currently, voting members must be present during final action hearings to be eligible to vote. This also presents an opportunity for BOMA members to enhance their influence in the code development process through outreach to local and state building, fire and other code officials.

BOMA's code advocacy team is currently developing materials to assist BOMA local associations and state coalitions to develop the most effective advocacy efforts to influence their code officials. Look for this code advocacy "toolkit" to be available early next year. For more information, contact BOMA's Director of Codes & Standards Michael Erbesfeld at merbesfeld@boma.org or BOMA's Code Consultant Ron Burton at ronburton@ptwadvisors.com. [1]

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