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President

A Call for Action

GREETINGS, IIBEC COMMUNITY!

In my first president's message, published in the May issue of *IIBEC Interface*, I highlighted several ways that IIBEC members can volunteer to make our association and our communities stronger. In this column, I am making a specific call for action: Please volunteer to advocate for important building code changes that improve public safety in the locales where you live and work.

As building enclosure professionals, IIBEC members understand that loads on building enclosures must be accurately assessed to protect building occupants, the owner, and the public from structural damage caused when enclosure systems are overloaded. One area of concern is live loads that occur when rain ponds on low-slope roofs. Many of us have investigated roof-structure collapses and discovered that ponding instability was the root cause.

In 2022 and 2023, our Codes and Standards Committee developed and proposed amendments to the 2024 *International Building Code* (IBC) Section 1512 to refine the codes for reroofing. Emily Lorenz, PE, did an outstanding job representing IIBEC during the proposal process, and two key IIBEC-proposed amendments to Article 1512.1 were adopted. As a result, the 2024 IBC clarifies the need for ponding instability evaluation, in accordance with ASCE 7, for certain low-slope roof replacement/recover projects.

These recent updates to the 2024 IBC are a great win for public life safety, our clients, and our association. But there is a catch: Model codes like the IBC do not have legal standing unless they are specifically referenced in a jurisdiction's building code, and many jurisdictions currently reference older code editions. Given the slow pace of local code revision, we cannot expect most jurisdictions to adopt the 2024 IBC any time soon. The reality is that the life-safety improvements to the 2024 IBC reroofing section are probably not in force in the codes governing our projects.

So, let me restate my call for action: We need local building enclosure professionals and other stakeholders to convince their local building code governance body—whether it be a municipality, state, or province—to amend their currently

adopted code with the improved language from Section 1512 of the 2024 IBC.

I was part of a Georgia team that heard this call and took action. We believed that the 2024 IBC reroofing updates were too important to wait until Georgia was ready to update its statewide code that references the 2018 IBC. Therefore, shortly after the 2024 IBC was released, our team proposed that Georgia update the reroofing section of the state code with language from the new model code. After submitting the proper documentation and application to state authorities, we attended board hearings and testified to justify and defend the application. And we were successful! The state's code amendment subcommittee unanimously voted to amend the reroofing section in the Georgia building code until such time as the state adopts the 2024 IBC. This amendment went into effect this past January.

Speaking from personal experience, I can tell you that local code amendment work takes some time and commitment, and each effort needs a point person or two to drive the process. However, the life-safety benefits for the public and our clients are worth every minute we invest in these endeavors.

If you decide to take up this challenge, you won't be alone. Contact IIBEC headquarters for support in getting started. I am available to discuss application documents appropriate for your jurisdiction, and Emily can also be a resource for you.

Finally, please keep in mind that reroofing is not the only area where we can propose beneficial code amendments. IIBEC members have successfully proposed and advocated for other changes to local codes, but there is much more work to be done. Today, the Codes and Standards Committee and Emily are working on proposed amendments to the 2027 IBC and the 2027 *International Residential Code*. You can play your own part by getting involved in the code amendment process at your local level.

Cheers all!

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