

ALLIANCE FOR BUILDING REGULATORY REFORM IN THE DIGITAL AGE

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NATIONAL CONFERENCE TARGETS STRENGTHENING THE ECONOMY AND MITIGATING DISASTER THROUGH DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION - Increasing America's Value Proposition – “Don't Go the Way of Rome!”

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- “Since 1970, the number of just weather-related natural disasters has grown 7 fold” - Congressman Earl Blumenauer, 3rd District Oregon
- “A 100 year flood or storm DOESN'T MEAN it can happen only ONCE IN 100 YEARS – It can happen anytime and happen repeatedly!” - Julie Rochman, President Institute for Business & Home Safety (IBHS)
- “50% of our population lives within 50 miles of our coasts and 30% of our population live in seismic zones” - Joan Woodward, Executive Vice President, Travelers Companies
- “The two earthquakes in New Zealand (Nov & Feb) will cut NZ's economic growth for 2011 in half!” -Item in ENR 3/5/11-
- “The total disaster relief costs of Katrina thus far are \$ 110 Billion. Estimated relief costs alone of a 7.9 quake along the San Andreas Fault in Southern California start at \$150 billion and go upward. Last year (2010) the Federal Government spent a total of \$10.8 Billion combined for Disaster Relief and Insurance.” - FEMA document
- “ What would be the impact of two Katrina sized disaster events in the same year in the U.S.? What would it do in terms of losses of life and property? What would it do to the nation's economic recovery? Given our current financial position, where would the Federal Government get the \$ to support Disaster Relief on that magnitude?” - Question from an attendee at the ENR Conference
- ”Every \$ spent by FEMA on hazard mitigation grants reduced post disaster relief costs by \$3.65 – Julie Rochman, President, IBHS
- “By retrofitting our properties to be more disaster resilient, we shift them into becoming a “highly protected risk” and lowered our square foot cost for annual insurance from 10-12cents down to 6 cents per square foot” – Robert Fenza, COO, Liberty Property & Trust

- “In Katrina jurisdictions which adopted and enforced building codes had 65% less damage than those which had not. “ – Julie Rochman, President, IBHS
- “Jurisdictions that have streamlined their building regulatory processes and put IT in place are speeding the response and reconstruction processes by months and not weeks or days.” – Robert C Wible, Principal, Robert Wible & Associates & FIATECH Project Manager
- ”In the 21st Century, competitive advantage will be in countries that are more disaster resilient” – Stephen Flynn – President, Center for National Policy

These and other facts and issues were shared and discussed by leaders from the nation’s land use, building design and construction, insurance, regulatory communities in a March 2-3 conference hosted in the nation’s Capital by Engineering News Record, McGraw-Hill, American Society of Civil Engineers and the National Building Museum. The program, “Mitigating Disaster Through Design & Construction – Planning and Building for Resiliency” discussed and identified actions that can be taken to both assure the nation’s economic sustainability and disaster resiliency through better land use, building codes, construction practices and Federal, state and local disaster preparedness, response and recovery policies and programs.

Meeting at a time when the Federal budget is being challenged to address economic recovery and deficit reduction, the program ended with a commitment to assemble basic recommendations to strengthen both economic sustainability and disaster resiliency and share them with Congress in a program report. The report is now being compiled with input from the conference speakers and moderators and is expected to be released sometime in May.

The report will include documentation presented by speakers and participants showing the significant savings to both the public and private sectors from: adopting and effectively enforcing building codes and land use practices with disaster mitigation and sustainability features, building above code requirements in highest risk areas, and the cost effectiveness of such provisions in building renovations.

Among changes called for during the conference were: the need for a high level national coordination of changes to codes to establish and maintain an integrated mapping of implications of proposed changes and adoption sequencing for different users and communities; multi-sector view of resiliency; changing in existing Federal policies the mix of disaster mitigation carrots and sticks; and the need to formulate and promote workable real world solutions to the problems the conference identified.

Best summarizing the two day program was panelist Stephen Flynn, President Center for National Policy, who stated that to ignore the needs to fund and undertake the disaster mitigation practices discussed for existing and new infrastructure was to condemn the nation to, “go the way of Rome.”

Among the keynote and featured speakers were: Sandra Knight, Deputy Federal Insurance & Mitigation Administrator, FEMA; Congressman Earl Blumenauer (3rd District Oregon), Julie Rochman, President and CEO of the Institute for Business & Home Safety. Moderators included: Louis A. Gritz, Vice President, Research, FM Global; Robert C. Wible, Principal Robert Wible & Associates and FIATECH Project Manager; Andy Smith, Solutions Executive, Bentley Systems; Charles V. Dinges IV, Senior Managing Director, Public Affairs, Membership & Marketing, American Society of Civil Engineers and Tom Sawyer, Senior Editor, Information Technology, Engineering News Record.

A summary report on the Panel moderated by Robert Wible on “How Planning, Codes & Standards Can Help Mitigation Succeed” and copies of his opening remarks are being posted to the Alliance’s website at: www.natlpartnerstreamline.org

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