

May 25, 2021

To All Members of Congress:

We, the undersigned organizations, represent a broad coalition of industries in the design and construction community. We are committed to improving the resilience of the built environment through more effective preparation and planning in advance of adverse events. Resilient structures and their surrounding locations are designed to withstand extreme events, minimize damage, maintain functionality, and - most importantly - protect building occupants.

As Congress considers multiple infrastructure proposals, we urge you to include resilient, high-performing buildings in any final legislation to ensure that they are addressed as a critical piece of infrastructure.

We recognize that disasters impact every community in America, and we cannot build solely to meet the needs of today; we must anticipate the elements the built environment will be expected to withstand 50 years into the future. Additionally, our industries understand that Americans spend over 90 percent of their time inside buildings. As such, attention must be given to the U.S. building stock as it is key to building and ensuring overall resiliency in our country.

Buildings are a vital part of our nation's infrastructure. Schools, hospitals, civic centers, commercial buildings, and housing are essential components of our neighborhoods and communities. These buildings are already integrated into other aspects of our nation's infrastructure in inextricable ways, including the U.S. electrical grid, drinking water and sewage systems, and even transportation through connected charging infrastructure. If one segment fails, other parts of the system can be compromised. We have seen this time and again in the wake of natural disasters.

This interconnected reality of buildings as infrastructure is already recognized by multiple branches of the federal government. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) all include buildings within their definitions of critical infrastructure.

The combination of aging infrastructure and worsening natural disasters has resulted in the unacceptable, yet preventable, loss of human life and costly property damage. Between 2014 and 2019, the United States experienced 77 weather and climate-related disasters where the overall damage reached or exceeded \$1 billion, with total costs of over \$550 billion, nearly 4,000 lives lost,¹ and hundreds of thousands of individuals and families left devastated. There are currently millions of buildings at high risk for flood, wind, fire, and earthquakes that

¹ <https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/billions/summary-stats/US/2016-2020>

must be adapted to achieve resilience for the future. Contemporary planning, building materials, and design, construction, and operational techniques will make our communities more resilient to these threats.

More must be done to retrofit and reinforce our nation's infrastructure—including buildings—to prepare for the challenges of the 21st century. The infrastructure proposals before Congress present a generational opportunity to create resilience – buildings and other types of infrastructure that will withstand both time and Mother Nature. We stand ready to serve as a resource to you as you consider investments in the built environment to safeguard building occupants and surrounding communities from disasters, while also achieving energy efficiency, high operational performance, and public and private cost savings.

Thank you for your ongoing efforts to improve our nation's infrastructure.

Sincerely,

Undersigned Groups:

Alliance for National & Community Resilience (ANCR)

American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC)

American Institute of Architects (AIA)

American Institute of Building Design (AIBD)

American Society of Interior Designers (ASID)

ASHRAE

Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC)

Association for Materials Protection and Performance (AMPP)

Building Owners and Managers Association (BOMA)

Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU)

EPDM Roofing Association

Flood Mitigation Industry Association (FMIA)

Green Building Initiative (GBI)

Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety (IBHS)

International Code Council (ICC)

International Institute of Building Enclosure Consultants (IIBEC)

National Ready Mixed Concrete Association (NRMCA)

National Society of Professional Engineers (NSPE)

Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS)

US Green Building Council (USGBC)

US Resiliency Council (USRC)