



**National Elevator Industry, Inc.**

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**Elevator Industry Amendment to Bill #6296**

• **Introduction**

- Hello, my name is Douglas Christensen. I am here representing the National Elevator Industry Inc. (NEII), and I am a Senior Regional Field Operations Manager with Otis Elevator Company. As the national trade association of the building transportation industry, NEII works to promote safe building transportation for new and existing products and technologies and adoption of the current codes by state and local government agencies. My own experience in the elevator industry began in 1984. I have worked as a mechanic, Field Engineer, Service Supervisor, Construction and Modernization Superintendent, Branch Manager and Regional Field Operations Manager. I have been involved with ASME Elevator Codes for the last 13 years. I thank the Committee for giving me an opportunity to testify and discuss the importance of the automatic adoption of the latest Elevator Safety Codes.

• **Why Bill No. 6296, as amended with elevator/escalator language, should be adopted.**

- The CT State Elevator Code should automatically adopt the updated version of the ASME (*American Society Mechanical Engineers*) Safety Codes because it assures the greatest protection to the riding public and the mechanics that service the equipment. Advances in technology that increase the safety and efficiency of elevators are occurring very rapidly throughout the industry, and the most recent ASME Code contains up-to-date safety standards reflecting the state-of-art technology. An existing elevator may be unsafe even though it complies with the ASME Code that was in place at the time of its installation. Typically the adoption of the latest ASME Code may take a state several years to adopt, simply because of the regulatory steps involved in the adoption process. In the meantime, state residents and businesses do not receive the benefit of the latest safety and efficiency innovations. For instance, Connecticut is now operating under the 1998 version of the code for new elevators, and the 1996 version of the code for existing elevators. Bill No. 6296, if adopted, would automatically incorporate the most recent editions of the Safety Code for new and existing elevators, escalators, platform lifts, stairway lifts, and people movers within one year following the publication of the updated code and standard. This would provide the benefit of enhanced

safety and efficiency to the public without an undue lag in time, thus preventing unnecessary accidents.

- **The purpose of ASME Elevator Codes** is to serve as a basis for state and local authorities to adopt requirements for new and existing elevators and escalators to enhance the safety of the public. It is also intended as a standard safety reference for the guidance of architects, engineers, insurance companies, manufactures, and contractors and as a standard of safety practices for building owners and managers. The Code establishes minimum requirements that will provide a reasonable degree of safety for the general public as well as mechanics and inspectors.
- **The History of Elevator Codes** begins with the new equipment code prior to World War I. These early codes covered basic provisions for locking landing doors, safety equipment for the car to prevent falling and excessive speed, limit switches at the extremes of travel among other provisions. The early editions did not differentiate between new and existing installations. In 1925 the code was adopted as an "American Standard" and by 1931 many jurisdictions as well as insurance companies insisted upon compliance with its provisions. Over time the Code was divided into an edition covering new elevators (A17.1) and one covering existing units (A17.3). Not all the provisions of A17.1 apply retroactively to existing units due to the cost of retrofits; however, generally important safety issues are applied retroactively to A17.3.
- **Make-up of ASME Committees that Create the Code** -- To illustrate the make-up of Code committees, I will use A17.3 as an example. This committee has approximately 25 members from a cross section of groups representing a variety of interests. The safety of the riding public is weighed against the cost to building owners for retrofit costs. All work must be approved by the A17.1 Standards Committee. Proposed rules are also reviewed by the National Interest Review Committee which includes representatives from all aspects of building operation. In addition, before a rule is made, the public has an opportunity to offer its input as part of the Public Review Process.
- **In summary**, I would like to ask each person in this room a question: "Would you want to, or have someone in your family, ride on an elevator or escalator that did not comply with the most recent safety standards?" If the answer is "no", then I request your support in adopting the amended Bill #6296.
- **Thank you** for your time and this opportunity to speak.