

Testimony of Peter W Zvingilas

Public Safety and Security Committee Public Hearing

Date 3-8-16

Chairman Dargan, Chairman Larson, Members of the Public Safety and Security Committee, for the record my name Peter Zvingilas from the town of Windham and I am here to testify in support of:

**SB-388 AAC The Department of Administrative Services Recommendations
Regarding the Adoption of the State Building and Fire Codes**

I would like to thank the committee for raising this bill and the opportunity to submit testimony here today.

I am here today to support the bill proposal SB-388 AAC The Department of Administrative Services Recommendations Regarding the Adoption of the State Building and Fire Codes. This bill will help accelerate our states adoption of building code cycles. Our code adoption process as it stands is in need of modifying. I am here to address a few of the concerns I see with having an old code cycle.

The current code our state uses is not in uniformity with other states. We are the only state in the U.S. that still uses the 2003 code cycle. While we have implemented a few newer code book editions to certain parts, we still are behind. This older version of code also causes confusion for builders, architects and engineers. The sheet submitted has a list of all the states with their current code cycle as of February 2016 to show where we are in comparison.

Regularly upgraded building codes ensure new products and practices make their way into new buildings. The process of updating model codes every three years is optimal to ensure new technologies, materials and methods, as well as better approaches to health and safety, can be incorporated into the next generation of buildings. Waiting longer between code updates means many buildings are not utilizing the advancements in building science and technology when built and stagnating the use of these new products. Code changes enable innovation in the building sector and permit the use of modern products. These innovations add value to buildings and improve their impact on health and safety.

According to the Environmental and Energy Study Institute in an study from 2013, forty percent of total U.S. energy consumption and forty percent of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions is created from buildings. The newer energy codes are making a major contribution toward reducing this. We all know the importance of our carbon footprint now and the Federal Government has recognized this. Financial incentives allocated to each state by the Federal Government for implementing current Energy Codes shows the national stance on use of a newer model energy code. These new codes deal with new insulation methods, new lighting practices, as well as high efficiency heating sources. This saves us money and reduces our

reliance on fossil fuels. The U.S. Department of Energy estimates energy efficiency improvements utilized in the 2009 and 2012 International Energy Conservation Code pay for themselves in one to two years, leaving the average homebuyer hundreds of dollars in energy savings annually during the life of the building. This extra income can be used to help stimulate local economic development.

Our professional training programs are an issue. Our electricians, plumbers, and mechanical technicians are all trained on a more current model code, not the 2003. Our own licensing process to become a building official deals with this. You can get certified with International Code Council as a building official using the current codes, but not on Connecticut's code cycle. While Connecticut offers its own license process to become an inspector, we cannot sell the students certain code books to study from because 2003 is no longer published by ICC. These issues reflect poorly on the whole system and while we have tremendously talented staff to teach, we are handcuffed by antiquated codes. While training resources are primarily provided at the state level, it is the national interest to support federal legislation that enhances the capabilities of code officials and inspectors through suitable training to ensure new construction meets or exceeds these minimum levels.

Updated codes will help stimulate the market for new housing by encouraging a more desirable product. The more dated a building code is, the less incentive local builders have to innovate, and the more inefficient and behind the times the building industry and its suppliers become. Adoption and enforcement of the most up-to-date codes reflect a states increased knowledge and commitment to ensuring the health and safety of its citizens. Failure to adopt and enforce current codes puts our state at a competitive disadvantage to our neighboring states. Thank you for this time.

Respectfully submitted,

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