



Pennsylvania Builders Association
600 N. Twelfth St.
Lemoyne, PA 17043
(800) 692-7339
(717) 730-4380
fax (717) 730-4396

Memorandum

To: Pennsylvania General Assembly

From: Lou Biacchi, Director of Government Affairs

Subject: Excessive Codes – As Measured by the Inch

Date: March 24, 2010

While the majority of the conversation regarding excessiveness of the 2009 construction codes is centered on the residential sprinkler requirements, that excessiveness is only part of the story.

Since the Pennsylvania General Assembly passed the Uniform Construction Code Act, which became Act 45 of 1999, and made the BOCA Building Code, the construction standard for Pennsylvania, construction codes have grown dramatically in complexity and code books have grown dramatically in number and size. This growth can best be illustrated by the attached photographs, which pictures the code books of 1999: the BOCA National Building Code and the CABO 1 and 2 Dwelling Code. The second photograph contains the 2009 Construction Codes, a total of 10 code books, all of which are necessary for the construction of a home.

For an informed point of view on this issue, please read the attached article – Residential Design Trends, from James Wentling, a Pennsylvania architect, who gives a design professional’s point of view of the ever-increasing complexity of construction codes. His attached photograph ---- showing code books is also illuminating the ever thickening of residential construction.

What should also be of interest to policy makers is the incredible money-making machine that the ICC code process has become. Amazingly, or not, there is at least one change from the 2006 edition in each of the fourteen ICC code books, necessitating the purchase of a 2009 version of each of those by every builder and a minimum of three sets by every municipal official. Total cost of these books? One set costs over \$500, while three sets is around \$1,600. The ICC is already hard at work making sure that the 2012 edition of the codes will necessitate the purchase of each edition of the 14 code books at that time.

In the midst of the worst housing recession since World War II, the homebuilders of Pennsylvania state again it is time for a “time out” in Pennsylvania’s code adoption process.