



Results of the ICC Public Hearings

The 2003 IBC public hearings were held between February 22nd and March 4th, 2005 in Cincinnati, Ohio. The four subcommittees of NCSEA's Code Advisory Committee (CAC) were in close communication and met, prior to the public hearings, to finalize their positions on the extensive number of proposed code changes. Ultimately, the CAC submitted 36 of the 226 code changes proposed for the structural section of the IBC.

Among these code changes were a set of joint proposals from NCSEA-CAC, ASCE/SEI 7, and BSSC, aimed at replacing most of the technical provisions, for determining loads for wind, snow and earthquake in the IBC, with reference to ASCE/SEI 7-05. The basic environmental hazard maps, and administrative requirements around design for these loads, remain in the IBC. In snow, that meant allowing only the ground snow load map to remain. In wind, the wind speed map and exposure definitions would remain. In seismic, it would be only the items needed to determine a Seismic Design Category. The triggering mechanisms for these environmental parameters were left in place due to the fact that, in many cases, other code provisions in the materials chapters of the IBC are dependent on either the magnitude of the snow load, the wind speed or the Seismic Design Category. After determining the environmental parameters, the user would go to ASCE/SEI 7, for all subsequent design loading provisions.

There are many other improvements being proposed by the CAC as well, all designed to make the Code easier to interpret and less confusing. Specific activities of each of the four subcommittees of the CAC are highlighted below.



Photo courtesy of FEMA

Seismic Subcommittee:

In preparation for the ICC public hearings, the Seismic Subcommittee met on January 24th in Washington, DC, together with the Code Resource Support Committee of the Building Seismic Safety Council (BSSC). The meeting served as an opportunity to review all the seismic-related code change proposals. Prior to that meeting, representatives of the NCSEA Seismic, General and Special Inspection – Quality Assurance Subcommittees met with other interested parties, in San Francisco on January 20th, to discuss and coordinate positions where there was potential overlap or disagreement. David Bonneville attended the hearings in Cincinnati on February 23rd-24th as chair of the Seismic Subcommittee.

Several members of the subcommittee are also representatives to the ASCE/SEI 7 Seismic Task Committee. These include John Hooper (Washington), Martin Johnson (California), Dominic Kelly (Massachusetts), Len Cobb (Alabama) and David Bonneville (California). A goal of ASCE/SEI, as well as NCSEA's CAC in the 2005 ICC code development cycle, was to adopt the ASCE/SEI 7-05 seismic provisions by reference in the 2006 IBC. The code change proposal, to leave in the IBC only the items needed to determine a Seismic Design Category, passed at the meeting in Cincinnati.

Special Inspection – Quality Assurance Subcommittee:

The Special Inspection – Quality Assurance Subcommittee met in Las Vegas on February 4th, 2005. Its main effort in the 2005 ICC code development cycle was to reorganize Chapter 17 of the IBC, to make comprehension and compliance easier. This effort resulted in (i) a general revision of the requirements of the basic statement of special inspections and the added requirements for seismic and wind resistance, to provide clarification, and (ii) a proposal that restricts the special inspection for seismic resistance to the same structures that require special inspections while maintaining the exemptions of Section 1704.1.

The Special Inspection – Quality Assurance Subcommittee also worked with representatives of the concrete, masonry, steel and wood industries, as well as individual code change proponents, to find common ground in making improvements to this important IBC chapter.

This Subcommittee took a position on each of the 24 Code Change Proposals submitted for Chapter 17, speaking at the hearing and making the Subcommittee position and recommendation known to the ICC Structural Committee. The representatives of this Subcommittee prevailed on 22 of the 24, lost on one, and withdrew one. The one lost proposal dealt with expanding Special Inspection related to wood construction. This proposal was defeated by the Building Officials on the IBC Structural Committee. They felt that inspection of timber construction was not Special, but just ordinary; and, therefore, it was the right and obligation of the Building Department.

General Engineering Subcommittee:

The General Engineering Subcommittee met in Las Vegas February 4th-5th, 2005. Prior to the public hearings in Cincinnati, the Subcommittee submitted 11 code changes. Two of those were withdrawn in Cincinnati, due to passage of similar code changes by other proponents. This Subcommittee was successful on 8 of the other 9 changes submitted, including (i) modifying the live load tables for catwalks, (ii) allowing live load reductions for live loads greater than 100 psf, if a rational analysis for the reduction is provided, (iii) clarifying and harmonizing the live load reduction for garages and for members supporting two or more floors, (iv) providing clarification on submittal requirements for open-web steel joists, and (v) temporarily modifying masonry lap splice requirements until ongoing research is completed.



Photo courtesy of FEMA

The Steel Joist Institute (SJI) also submitted a code change proposal on the open-web steel joist issue. The General Engineering Subcommittee met with SJI, which resulted in subsequent correspondence and a mutually agreeable compromise and revision to the NCSEA code change proposal. After the modified NCSEA code change was passed in Cincinnati, SJI asked that its competing code change be disapproved. Based on that outcome, the wood truss industry also asked that two of their code changes be disapproved; and their representatives are working with three members of this Subcommittee, to attempt to craft mutually acceptable language. If this happens, the new, mutually agreeable code change will be proposed as a public comment for the Final Action Public Hearings to be held in September.

Another goal of ASCE/SEI, as well as NCSEA's Code Advisory Committee, was to adopt the ASCE/SEI 7-05 simplified wind and snow provisions by reference in the 2006 IBC. These code changes passed in Cincinnati.

The General Engineering Subcommittee also took positions on 72 other code change proposals. Of these, this Subcommittee prevailed on 54; and 15 more were withdrawn or modified to meet the Subcommittee's objections.

Existing Buildings Subcommittee:

The Existing Buildings Subcommittee positions were developed during a meeting held in Dallas, Texas on January 22nd, 2005. Post-meeting work was undertaken to coordinate differences between SEAOC and SEAW. Where these differences could not be resolved, the Existing Buildings Subcommittee took no position.

David Bonowitz, SEAOC, David Pomerleau, SEAOC and Peter Somers, SEAW, testified on behalf of the NCSEA Existing Buildings Subcommittee at the ICC Code Hearings in Cincinnati, on March 2nd and 3rd, 2005. Principally, the proposed changes in the IBC were related to structural safety, and the proposed changes in the International Existing Building Code (IEBC) cleaned up the triggers and confusing language. Secondly, this Subcommittee proposed technical clarifications and changes to Appendix A of the IEBC. These changes were aimed at improving the language to permit the engineering community to better use the code.

The Existing Buildings Subcommittee members spoke on each proposal and cooperated on modifications on the floor. Favorable changes were also made to the IBC and IEBC; and almost all of the changes to Appendix A were accepted.

It is expected that some approved NCSEA modifications may be challenged at the Final Action Public Hearings. Similarly, this Subcommittee may submit challenges at the Final Action Public Hearings.



*Jim Delahay
 Chairman, 2002-2005
 NCSEA Code Advisory Committee*



within two years, he was voted chair. Prior to becoming Chair of NCSEA's CAC, he served as chair of the General Engineering Subcommittee.

Jim had a vision for the NCSEA Code Advisory Committee and for model building codes themselves. He was passionate about making codes simpler and more direct. He was also passionate about NCSEA's role in the process. He saw NCSEA as the one organization that, in his words, "didn't have a dog in this fight." By that he meant that NCSEA didn't represent any materials interest, didn't do research and didn't write standards. He believed that this made NCSEA the best candidate to be the "one clear voice" for structural engineers in the building code arena. Jim had great plans to expand NCSEA's role in this important endeavor, to include review and coordination of standards referenced by the model building codes. Despite his premature passing, part of Jim's legacy is that buildings across the country will be a little safer due to his work on the model building codes.

Jim Delahay was a true gentleman, with great integrity, knowledge, and kindness. His personality was such that he was universally admired and liked. He made friends easily and used his intelligence and wit to bring people together and find common ground even on difficult issues. Jim will be sorely missed by all of his friends on the Code Advisory Committee. All of us feel at least part of the loss that his family and partners are now sharing. ■

Jim Delahay, Chair of the NCSEA Code Advisory Committee since 2002, passed away suddenly on April 16th, 2005. He was involved in building code development since 1991, representing the Structural Engineer's Association of Alabama (SEAoAL) on the Southern Building Code Congress International's (SBCCI) Wind Load Committee. In 1999 Jim was selected as one of three practicing engineers nationwide to serve on the IBC Structural Committee and,

