

June 18, 2018

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Minority Leader Schumer:

We are writing to you in support of provisions in S. 3041, Disaster Recovery Reform Act of 2018 (DRRA) concerning building standards and codes, and urge the Senate to take action on this important piece of legislation. DRRA would implement several common-sense reforms to mitigation and disaster recovery efforts by updating the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act.

ASHRAE is a non-profit engineering society founded in 1894 with more than 56,000 members worldwide who focus on building systems, energy efficiency, indoor air quality, refrigeration and sustainability. Many of our members saw firsthand the devastation caused by natural disasters in 2017. From hurricanes sweeping through Texas, Florida, and Puerto Rico to the wildfires that raged through northern California, this was the most costly year on record with \$306 billion in damages according to the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). DRRA would allow for increased spending on mitigation projects that ultimately reduce costs following an extreme weather event. The National Institute of Building Sciences released a report earlier this year that was sponsored by FEMA and HUD on hazard mitigation practices. The report determined for every \$1 spent on "mitigation projects," the federal government would save \$6.

DRRA would allow FEMA to contribute funds for adopting and enforcing the "latest published editions of relevant consensus-based codes, specifications, and standards." It emphasizes the need not to simply rebuild but building back stronger to combat future disasters that threaten communities. It would also utilize the expertise of licensed architects and engineers to assist with developing "guidance, including best practices, for post disaster assessment of buildings by licensed architects and engineers to ensure the architects and engineers properly analyze the structural integrity and livability of buildings and structures." This includes coordinating efforts with State and local governments and organizations representing architects and engineers giving government agencies a set of strategies that will be cost-effective and assist in their recovery efforts.

ASHRAE applauds the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee for advancing DRRA out of the committee by a voice-vote on June 13th. We strongly encourage the full Senate to consider the legislation as these provisions enhance recovery efforts by encouraging funding for mitigation measures that will increase building resiliency.

Sincerely,



Bjarne Olesen, Ph.D.
2017-2018 President