

ICC Releases International Green Construction Code - Daily News Article

WASHINGTON, DC-The International Code Council released its 2012 International Green Construction Code (IgCC), a new body of work aimed at state and local governments looking to codify green building practices, which has been three years in the making. The organization crafted the code in conjunction with the American Institute of Architects, ASTM international, ASHRAE, the Illuminating Engineering Society and the US Green Building Council. The end result, Richard P. Weiland, CEO of the ICC, tells GlobeSt.com, "is a baseline document or regulatory framework that different jurisdictions can use for sustainable construction practices."

The new code incorporates the 2011 version of a benchmark standard in the industry—ANSI/ASHRAE/IES/USGBC Standard 189.1—but it also gives localities more flexibility in how they implement it, Weiland says. "We began this push several years ago when different jurisdictions began developing their own standards and there were so many ordinances and codes being developed," he says. "We jumped in to create a national code."

Perhaps most significantly, the code is written in mandatory language as opposed to the volunteer-based rating systems of other standards developers, he adds.

In the view of AIA's Jessyca Henderson, the mandatory language is a game changer. "In the building regulatory arena, confusion reigns on how best to make buildings energy efficient and sustainable," Henderson, who is managing director of policy and community relations for the organization, tells GlobeSt.com.

"Until now there has been no model document written in mandatory language," she continues. "The ICC is offering a credible, enforceable and adoptable green code, instead of the current practice of reinventing the wheel at the local level or relying on rating systems, which are not written to be enforced as law."

Henderson argues that LEED was not designed for compatibility with the prevailing model building codes, while the IgCC is. Also, she says, while LEED has proven effective in challenging society to do better and do more, it is costly to register and time-consuming on top of also having to comply with all applicable codes and owner project requirements. "The IgCC presents a streamlined approach for base level green provisions and where adopted, design and enforcement will be a normal part of doing business." LEED certification, she adds, "would certainly still be available to tenants and builders seeking that form of recognition."

IgCC is very complementary with the ASHRAE standard 189.1 in that it is deemed to comply with the IgCC and included as an option for design teams and owners that wish to follow its provisions, she adds. "All but chapter 1 of IgCC gets replaced by 189.1 if the design team and owner choose that route for compliance."

Builders will benefit from the new code in several ways, Henderson says. "We know anecdotally that any builder working on Class-A office space already commonly contends with LEED requirements," she

says. "The IgCC will help builders employ sustainable construction practices within language they already know well—the building code. Owners will, of course, be able to elect to use LEED for 'above and beyond' performance, and the IgCC is an important starting point."

Also, under the IgCC there will be no "green permit." In jurisdictions that adopt the IgCC all the permits that are commonly applied for would stay in place, and the IgCC simply adds an additional layer of enforcement, says Henderson—and it's up to the jurisdiction to decide how to do that.

"For builders that have been complying with LEED, the IgCC offers a set of requirements that are clearer—there are choices to be made, but instead of chasing after credits and documenting and submitting all the paperwork required for LEED, they will be able to follow the code and know they're meeting both the base building code and the green requirements all under one set of enforcement procedures," Henderson concludes.