



H.R. 4461 – Community Building Code Administration Grant Act of 2007

FLOOR SITUATION

H.R. 4461 is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Representative Dennis Moore (D-KS) on December 12, 2007. The bill was ordered to be reported by voice vote, as amended, by the House Committee on Financial Services on June 24, 2008.

H.R. 4461 is expected to be considered on the floor of the House on July 9, 2008.

SUMMARY

Grant Program: This bill authorizes the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to award grants on a competitive basis to local building code enforcement departments. The specific criteria to be used to select grant recipients are established in this provision. No grant award may exceed \$1 million.

According to H.R. 4461, grant proposals for local building code enforcement departments must be submitted to the Secretary. These proposals must demonstrate the jurisdiction's needs, a plan for the use of funds, a plan for local government to sustain local enforcement without continuing Federal support, as well as a plan to maintain public outreach regarding the services of the local building code enforcement department.

Grant funds provided under this legislation may be used to increase staffing, provide training, increase staff qualifications, or for capital expenditures dedicated to the administration of the local building code enforcement department.

Matching Funds: This bill requires jurisdictions receiving a grant that serve over 50,000 persons to provide at least 50 percent matching funds. Jurisdictions serving between 20,000 and 50,000 persons must provide matching funds at a level of no less than 25 percent. Grant recipients which serve less than 20,000 people must provide matching funds at a level of 12.5 percent. In-kind contributions may account for up to 50 percent of non-Federal matching funds.

The Secretary may waive this matching funds requirement based on the level of economic distress in a local jurisdiction.

Reporting: H.R. 4461 requires grants recipients to report on the use of all grant funds, grant program effectiveness, and lessons learned to the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development. The Secretary must make these reports available to the public over the Internet.

Authorization of Appropriations: The bill authorizes the appropriation of \$20 million for each of the fiscal years 2009-2013 for the purposes of the Act.

BACKGROUND

Building codes establish minimum requirements which provide safety standards, reduce property losses and guard public health. Currently, building codes are adopted by state and local governments. Property owners within these jurisdictions must then adhere to these established minimum legal standards. It is believed that mitigation efforts such as local building code administration and enforcement are effective in reducing taxpayer expenses in the case of necessary Federal disaster relief assistance.

There are currently no specifically dedicated Federal funds available for building code administration at the State and local level. However, FEMA administration allowances and the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) have been used for this purpose in



LEGISLATIVE DIGEST

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the past. HUD has raised concerns over whether a new grant program is necessary as CDBG funds may already be used for this purpose.

Although this legislation does not change State and local authority over building codes or establish any building code standards at the Federal level, some have raised concerns that a national grant program for local code enforcement could lead to a uniform national standard for building codes to which all localities must adhere, according to Financial Services Committee Republican staff.

COST

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates that H.R. 4461 would “cost \$90 million over the 2009-2013 period and \$10 million in fiscal year 2014.” [Full CBO Cost Estimate](#)

STAFF CONTACT

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