

Veto HB 1021

Great grassroots activism - Ask the Governor to VETO HB 1021!

Already staff at the Governor's Office are asking, "Are you an architect calling to request the Governor veto HB1021? There have been many who have called ahead of you" . Have you made your call?

HB 1021 by Representative Avila (R-Miami-Dade) has not yet arrived on the Governor's desk, but when it does, he has 15 days to sign, veto the bill or let it become law without his signature. HB 1021 seeks to adversely modify the code adoption process that heretofore, protected the health, safety, and welfare of Florida's citizens by ensuring that the Florida Building Code remains current with the International Codes and that licensed construction and design professionals are held to the highest standards.

AIA Florida supports regulation by a single set of comprehensive, coordinated, and contemporary codes and standards which establish a sound threshold of health safety and welfare for the protection of the public throughout the United States. The AIA Florida governmental team supports a veto and is calling for grassroots participation from members to sway Gov. Scott to veto this bill.

AIA Florida urges members to let their voices be heard in regard to this important issue. Members can do so by calling the Citizen Services phone number at 850.717.9418 and asking for HB 1021 to be vetoed. Please see the letter sent to Governor Scott [HERE](#). If you have questions about the bill or if we can provide additional information, please contact our General Counsel, J. Michael Huey at 850-577-9090 or Vicki Long, CAE, Hon.AIA, at 850-222-7590.



The Honorable Rick Scott
Plaza Level 05, The Capitol
400 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

June 2, 2017

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The American Institute of Architects
1735 New York Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20006

(800) 242 3837

www.aia.org

Dear Governor Scott:

The Florida Association of the American Institute of Architects (AIA FL) and The American Institute of Architects representing over 3,200 Floridians and 90,000 design professionals nationally, urge you to veto CS/CS/HB 1021. If enacted, this bill would threaten the safety of millions of people and risk enormous economic damage.

Florida has one of the strongest building codes in the nation, but that has not always been the case. In 1992, an ineffective patchwork of competing codes and processes left the state virtually defenseless against Hurricane Andrew, leading to an estimated \$26 billion in damages and destroying nearly 50,000 homes. This catastrophe spurred reforms in the code process, leading to the strong building code Florida utilizes today.

Unfortunately, HB 1021 would send Florida back to the pre-Andrew days by eliminating important safeguards that require the state to update the code based on nationally recognized model codes to ensure that it reflects state-of-the-art knowledge of building safety. As a result, millions of Floridians will be left with a building code that does not make safety the top priority.

Supporters of this bill claim that it will save money. The facts tell a different story: Weakening the Florida code could lead to higher insurance premiums for homeowners and businesses alike. The Florida Floodplain Managers Association estimates that the bill could cost Florida homeowners approximately \$60 million in lost annual flood insurance discounts. Worst of all, a weaker code could lead to much higher costs for rebuilding following a major disaster – at the very moment that policymakers in Washington are looking to reduce funding for FEMA and other programs that help communities after disasters.

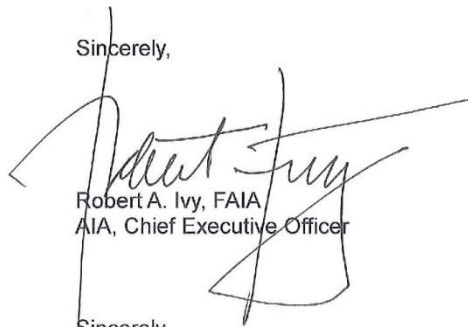
The American Institute of Architects

Supporters of the bill also contend that the current process is flawed because it forces the state to essentially re-create the code every three years. That is simply not true. The current Florida code is the product of a continuous process of refinement that builds on previous versions of the code with the latest in scientific research, state-of-the-art technology, and post-disaster evaluations. This process keeps Floridians safe from harm and protects the state's economy. In fact, a Wharton study released last year of the Florida Building Code found that constructing to meet the building code minimum saves tax payers approximately \$5 as compared to jurisdictions that do not have a building code.

Enacting HB 1021 will give a green-light to special interests to attempt to weaken building codes in other states. Their argument will be simple: if Florida, a state that faces enormous natural threats, can weaken its code, then so can we. We cannot allow special interests to threaten the safety and well-being of millions of people.

As we enter the 2017 hurricane season this week, we urge you to protect the "gold standard" of state building codes and ensure that Florida remains at the vanguard of resilient communities by vetoing this short-sighted bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Ivy", written over a vertical line that extends from the "Sincerely," above.

Robert A. Ivy, FAIA
AIA, Chief Executive Officer

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Vicki Long", written below the "Sincerely," above.

Vicki L. Long, CAE, Hon. AIA
AIA-FL, Executive Vice President