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**Advocacy Digest | September 26, 2023**

**Brad Boycks, Executive Director**

**WBA ask JCRAR to reject update of commercial building code**

**Recently WBA sent a joint letter with the Wisconsin Realtors Association asking the co-chairs of the Joint Committee for the Review of Administrative Rules (JCRAR) to object to the update of the commercial building code that has been introduced by the Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS).**

**Our main objection to the update is we believe the changes will increase the initial cost of construction of all commercial building, including multifamily construction. We also believe that the increases that would come with the adoption of the new code (most notably going to the 2021 energy code for commercial buildings) would negatively impact the cost of housing and would offset the likely savings that will be gained for the passage of four workforce housing loan programs which were passed with bipartisan votes and signed into law by Governor Evers this summer.**

**Our joint letter to co-chairs Senator Nass and Representative Neylon concluded by saying, “**Predictability in the marketplace is a key factor for builders and developers to move forward with projects to build commercial buildings, including multifamily housing units. The past year has been anything but predictable with high interest rates, inflation at a 22-year high, and continued construction supply chain challenges.

Bringing forth a new commercial building code at this point will not only add to the already unpredictable nature of construction but will increase the cost of housing and likely prevent some multifamily housing projects from moving forward, thus delaying the ability to close the housing gap.

We would respectfully ask you to object to CR 23-007 in its entirety.”

**FROM NAHB: Senate Bill Would Repeal Onerous Energy Codes Provision**

**At NAHB’s urging, Sen. Mike Braun (R-Ind.) introduced S. 2806, the Homeowner Energy Freedom Act, legislation that would repeal a section of the Inflation Reduction Act that provides $1 billion to pressure state and local governments to adopt costly and restrictive energy codes.**

**Joining as original co-sponsors were Sens. John Barrasso (R-Wyo.), John Thune (R-S.D.), Roger Marshall (R-Kan.), Roger Wicker (R-Miss.), Shelley Moore Capito (R-W.Va.), Eric Schmitt (R-Mo.), Marco Rubio (R-Fla.), Pete Ricketts (R-Neb.), Josh Hawley (R-Mo.), J.D. Vance (R-Ohio) and Cynthia Lummis (R-Wyo.)**

**“NAHB commends these 12 senators for introducing the Homeowner Energy Freedom Act, legislation that will protect energy choices for consumers while preserving housing affordability,” said NAHB Chairman Alicia Huey. “While NAHB supports the adoption of cost-effective, modern energy codes, we oppose the current law that pressures state and local governments to adopt costly and restrictive energy codes to qualify for federal grants. By directly addressing this issue, the bill will help make housing more affordable for countless American families.”**

**NAHB believes that forcing the adoption of costly energy codes to qualify for these grants would exacerbate the current housing affordability crisis and limit energy choices for consumers. Adoption of the 2021 International Energy Conservation Code can cost a home buyer as much as $31,000 in additional costs and can take as long as 90 years for home owners to see a payback from these investments.**

**The Homeowner Energy Freedom Act is a Senate companion bill to legislation passed by the House earlier this year, the Lower Energy Costs Act (H.R. 1).**

**As the legislative process moves forward, NAHB will work with lawmakers to pass the Homeowner Energy Freedom Act either as a standalone bill or by attaching it to other must-pass legislative vehicles.**