



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE FIRE MARSHALS

Government Relations

August 1, 2002

Dear:

Last month, the National Association of State Fire Marshals (NASFM) – through its Catastrophic Fire Prevention Task Force – initiated a study of the building codes' effectiveness in preventing major fires in commercial, mercantile and institutional buildings. The events of September 11 focused our nation on these issues, but as you know, some of these questions have persisted for years. It is time to have some answers.

We are calling this project “The Partnership for Safer Buildings.” The choice of the word “partnership” is deliberate. The group combines experts from the fire service, standards organizations, and affected industries. I have enclosed a packet of information more precisely describing the group's mission, specific tasks and membership.

NASFM's mission is to protect life, property and the environment from fire. We expect the Partnership to contribute to that goal by recommending specific improvements to the building codes. The recommendations will come forward in two waves – items that need immediate attention, and those that may require more thought.

The Partnership will base its recommendations on the work of three subcommittees: one will review the actual codes. A second subcommittee will make site visits to determine if apparent weaknesses in the codes pose actual hazards in the real world. The third subcommittee will interact with other groups conducting similar work. I will personally chair the third group, and commit to keeping you informed as the Partnership's work moves forward.

As the Partnership's recommendations are made, we hope to meet with you to discuss and determine appropriate courses of action for each item. With those meetings in mind, may I suggest that you designate a senior member of your staff to serve as a liaison to the Partnership.

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Please do not hesitate to call me if you have any questions about this work, and allow me to thank you in advance for your help and support of this important effort.

Sincerely,

Donald P. Bliss
President

cc Board of Directors
Catastrophic Fire Prevention Task Force
Partnership for Safer Buildings