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Regulatory Secretariat Division
General Services Administration
1800 F Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20405

Via regulations.gov

Re: Comments of the International Code Council on the Department of Defense (DoD), General Services Administration (GSA), and National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR): Disclosure of Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Climate-Related Financial Risk; FAR Case 2021-015

The International Code Council (ICC) is a nonprofit organization of roughly 600 employees, driven by the engagement of its more than 63,000 members, that is dedicated to helping communities and the building industry provide safe, resilient, and sustainable construction through the development and use of model codes (I-Codes) and standards used in design, construction, and compliance processes. Most U.S. states and communities, federal agencies, and many global markets choose the International Codes (I-Codes) to set the standards for regulating construction and major renovations, plumbing and sanitation, fire prevention, and energy conservation in the built environment.

DoD, GSA and, NASA already value many of the Code Council's building safety solutions across the federal building stock. GSA relies on the latest edition of the I-Codes including the International Green Construction Code (IgCC) as the basis for its P100 design requirements. DoD requires several of the I-Codes through the [Unified Facilities Criteria \(UFC\)](#), including the 2018 editions of the International Building Code (IBC), International Residential Code, International Existing Building Code, and the International Plumbing Code under UFC 1-200-01 for their buildings and facilities. The UFC also cites ASHRAE 189.1, which is the basis for the IgCC. In addition, NASA's Procedural Requirements (NPR) for Facility Project Requirements (FPR) requires designs to meet or exceed the locally adopted, nationally recognized building codes and standards – requiring the latest edition of the IBC in jurisdictions without a nationally recognized code adoption.

We applaud DoD, GSA, and NASA's efforts to further address the impacts of the buildings and facilities it constructs and leases. The Code Council is dedicated to providing the building industry with the tools necessary to realize safety, sustainability, and resilience goals. This includes achieving decarbonization goals through the effective use of materials and construction practices across the nation's building stock.

Recognizing the need for a coordinated and deliberate approach, in September, the Code Council Board of Directors approved [Decarbonization of The Built Environment: Solutions from the International Code Council](#), which recognizes the significant impact of buildings on the environment and the need for a coordinated set of solutions to support the achievement of energy and greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction goals set by governments. The report also calls for expanded activities that support a coordinated



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approach across the I-Codes, standards, and other solutions. This highlights the Code Council's ongoing commitment to deliver the tools that communities and the federal government need to realize their climate-related goals.

The Code Council's comments regarding the proposed amendment to the FAR requiring major Federal suppliers to publicly disclose GHG emissions and climate-related financial risk and to set science-based reduction targets are outlined below.

The IgCC provides a holistic approach to addressing sustainability—including through materials and energy efficiency and water conservation. The IgCC already includes measures in Chapter 9 on the carbon impacts of materials and the use of environmental product declarations (EPDs) and life cycle analysis. We commend GSA and DoD for its recognition of the IgCC's provisions as a valuable tool in advancing sustainability and encourage the agency to leverage the provisions in Chapter 9 as it sets its materials related policies.

The Code Council has also begun the development process for an American National Standard to assess greenhouse gas emissions across the entire building life cycle. ASHRAE/ICC Standard 240P – *Evaluating Greenhouse Gas and Carbon Emissions in Building Design, Construction and Operation*, will provide a whole life carbon approach to support emissions reductions in buildings. The proposed standard will establish how to calculate and verify the GHG emissions of a building, or group of buildings, over their entire life cycle. The goal is to provide consistent procedures and data to be referenced by policies, codes, and other standards that address new and existing building performance. The Code Council engaged organizations both in the U.S. and internationally to assure the standards are broadly applicable and can support a global approach. The standards development process has begun with a target for completion in early 2025.

Like other performance requirements, the expected levels of performance and the methods for verifying such performance should rely on a robust set of standards or protocols. Additionally, they should be easily verified by those responsible for enforcing the codes. The environmental performance requirements should also be considered in the context of the existing performance requirements in the codes and in a manner that is consistent across materials providing similar function. EPDs have been identified as a primary tool for transparency communication of the environmental impacts of products/materials. However, EPDs have not been generated for all materials and products used in construction. The ICC Evaluation Service (ICC-ES) is an accredited EPD Program Operator, providing the tools necessary for development of product category rules (PCRs) and verification of EPDs and stands ready to assist manufacturers in expanding the availability of EPDs.

EPD Program Operators demonstrate expertise, capability, capacity, and impartiality through accreditation to ISO 14020 (*Environmental labels and declarations — General principles*), 14025 (*Environmental labels and declarations — Type III environmental declarations — Principles and procedures*), 21930 (*Sustainability in building construction — Environmental declaration of building products*), and 17065 (*Conformity assessment — Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services*). To ensure the soundness of product EDPs, the FAR should require that any acceptable



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EPDs necessary for the disclosure of GHG emissions and climate-related financial risk be verified by a Program Operator that is accredited to the above ISO standards.

Additionally, one concern often expressed is whether materials with lower environmental impact than traditional versions of the material deliver a similar level of performance. In addition to being an EPD Program Operator, ICC-ES evaluates products for their compliance with building codes or relevant industry standards. ICC-ES recently developed an Acceptance Criteria on the performance of low-carbon alternative cements for use in concrete (AC529). ICC-ES recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the American Concrete Institute to help advance the achievement of carbon neutrality in cement. Marrying EPDs with product evaluations can be a valuable tool to address multiple performance requirements. To ensure both environmental and traditional (physical, mechanical, thermal, chemical, etc.) performance properties are achieved for federal building materials, the FAR should include requirements to ensure materials and products demonstrate both an acceptable EPD as well as an acceptable report or listing that demonstrates the material/product meets the traditional performance requirements the I-Codes adopted within the P100 require. The Code Council recommends that the amended FAR requires conformity assessment bodies conducting these evaluations be accredited, in this instance to ISO 17065, to ensure requisite expertise, capability, capacity, and independence.

In addition, Federal contractors should be required to coordinate with accredited EPD Program Operators and conformity assessment bodies to analyze their current GHG emissions baselines of their building stock in order to properly set science-based reduction targets under the proposed amendment to the FAR. Coordination with these accredited providers, like ICC-ES, will ensure that baselines are disclosed, and Federal suppliers can enhance their products' performance to reduce GHG emissions and overall environmental footprint of the Federal building stock. The Code Council also recommends the amended FAR incorporates requirements to implement ASHRAE/ICC Standard 240 upon completion to measure and verify the GHG emissions of the Federal building stock. In doing so, Federal suppliers can ensure that they are streamlining the processes of verifying the baseline emissions of their buildings and are following the accredited assessment processes to reduce the overall GHG emissions footprint and climate-related financial risks of buildings moving forward.

The Code Council strongly encourages DoD, GSA, and NASA to incorporate these outlined solutions as mechanisms while establishing the newly proposed disclosure and target requirements as an amended section of Executive Order 14030 Climate-Related Financial Risk.

We look forward to continued work with the U.S. Federal Agencies to improve the performance and environmental footprint of the federal building stock.



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Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments. If you have any questions concerning these recommendations, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

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