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January 19, 2010

The Honorable John F. Kerry, Chairman
The Honorable Richard Lugar, Ranking Minority Member
Committee on Foreign Relations
SD-446 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-6225

Dear Chairman Kerry, Ranking Member Lugar, and Committee Members:

The International Code Council (Code Council), the American Institute of Architects (AIA) and ASTM International extend our support and prayers to the people of Haiti. The earthquake devastation we are witnessing in Haiti could have been prevented. Substandard design, inadequate materials, poor or non-existent construction requirements and lack of enforcement contributed to the substandard construction. The Code Council, a not for profit organization, develops the model codes adopted and enforced in all 50 states and by Federal agencies, and that are adapted and used as resources in other nations around the world. The AIA is the nation's professional organization for architects, with more than 80,000 members who are committed to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of people who use the buildings and communities they design. ASTM International is a globally recognized source for standards, specifications, practices and test methods utilized in over 75 countries to improve the design, construction and performance of buildings and related infrastructure.

In 2001 our organizations worked with Senators Dodd, Lieberman and Sessions and Representative Rosa DeLauro on legislation called the Codes and Safety for the Americas Act (CASA Act), that passed as an amendment in the Foreign Relations Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2003, PL 107-228, September 30, 2002 (now codified at Title 22, Ch 32, Sec. 2152, USC). The Act authorized a sustainable program through the US Agency for International Development (USAID) to assist countries in dealing with the mitigation of disasters, by training appropriate professionals in Latin America from both the public and private sectors to enhance their understanding of building design, codes and standards. The program also provided for the translation of model building codes, standards and publications that address zoning, egress, fire and life safety, plumbing, sewage, sanitation, electrical installation, mechanical installation, structural engineering and seismic design.

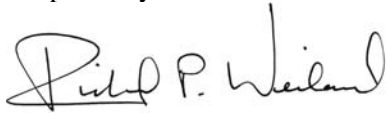
Unfortunately, and despite the tremendous efforts and resources our organizations put into it and working in collaboration with the mentioned Members of the Senate and House and their respective staffs, and the desperate requests for help from countries like Ecuador, El Salvador, Haiti and others, funds were never appropriated for the CASA Act, and USAID never budgeted funds to implement the Act. The CASA Act was passed in the wake of the El Salvador's earthquake in 2001, to avoid the tragic loss of life caused by that quake. One need only contrast the quake in Northridge, CA in 1994 (similar in magnitude to the Haiti quake), with only 60 lives lost, due to the strong building codes and enforcement in California, to the sad result in Haiti, where no modern building code or enforcement is present.

The US and other nations will provide the much needed assistance to Haiti so the people may rebuild their homes, hospitals, schools, businesses and churches. We know that proper code administration, sound design and knowledge of current construction standards can reduce the risk of damage and loss of life so we write to you today to request that you consider funding the CASA Act program as a sound investment

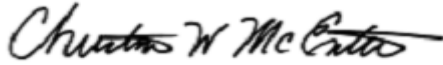
in the future of Haiti and other Latin American countries. We have the knowledge and the technologies to help Haiti through its reconstruction process, to use the U.S. model codes to implement their own building codes and practices that will help improve the resistance of buildings and housing in that region to seismic activity and other natural disasters.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We are eager to assist in any way we can. We look forward to hearing from you.

Respectfully,



Richard P. Weiland, Chief Executive Officer, International Code Council



Christine W. McEntee, Executive Vice President/Chief Executive Officer, American Institute of Architects



James A. Thomas, President, ASTM International