

AIA Wisconsin

A Society of The American Institute of Architects



May 13, 2015

Public Hearing – 2015 Senate Bill 86 Senate Committee on Insurance, Housing and Trade

Committee Chair & Members:

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on proposed legislation that would rename two state code councils. I am William Babcock, executive director of AIA Wisconsin, the state society of the American Institute of Architects (AIA).

The proposed legislation to rename the Dwelling Code Council the Uniform Dwelling Code Council and the Building Code Council the Commercial Building Code Council makes sense. The new names would be more descriptive of the responsibilities of these two code councils and help avoid confusion with other councils.

AIA Wisconsin supports comprehensive, coordinated and contemporary state building codes that are developed by consensus, with the active participation of architects and allied design and construction industry professionals. Building codes are developed and enforced to protect the health, safety and welfare of the public. The protection of public health, safety and welfare also is the reason architects are licensed in Wisconsin and every other state. Wisconsin is fortunate to have statewide building codes.

We do have a request. AIA Wisconsin members ask the sponsors of the proposed legislation and members of this committee to consider a simple amendment to clarify that at least one of the two members on the Commercial Building Code Council representing architects, engineers and designers is an architect. We respectfully request that section 15.407 (18) (a) 5. of the statutes be amended to read:

15.407 (18) (a) 5. Two members representing architects, engineers, and designers, each of whom is actively engaged in the design or evaluation of public buildings and buildings that are places of employment and at least one of whom is an architect.

Wisconsin architects are responsible for interpreting all aspects of the state commercial building code. As the building owner's "design professional" and "supervising professional" for many commercial building projects, architects often deal with code requirements on a more comprehensive basis than designers of engineering systems and most professional engineers who may only be responsible for the design of specific building components or individual systems. AIA Wisconsin believes it is important to have at least one architect on the Commercial Building Code Council.

The Wisconsin Society of Architects (d.b.a. "AIA Wisconsin") represents over 1,300 individual members, including architects in private practice, business, industry, government and education. Thank you for this opportunity to offer our comments and suggestions on 2015 Senate Bill 86.

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Wisconsin Statutes – Section 15.407 (18)

(18) BUILDING CODE COUNCIL. (a) There is created in the department of safety and professional services a building code council consisting of the following members appointed for 3-year terms:

1. Two members representing the skilled building trades, each of whom is actively engaged in his or her trade.
2. Two members representing local building inspectors, each of whom is authorized to do inspections under s. 101.12 (4) and who is employed by a city, village, or county.
3. Two members representing the fire services, each of whom is actively engaged in fire service work and at least one of whom is a fire chief.
4. Two members representing building contractors, each of whom is actively engaged in on-site construction of public buildings and buildings that are places of employment.
5. Two members representing architects, engineers, and designers, each of whom is actively engaged in the design or evaluation of public buildings and buildings that are places of employment.

(b) An employee of the department shall serve as nonvoting secretary of the council.

(c) The council shall meet at least 2 times annually.

(d) Six members of the council shall constitute a quorum. For the purpose of conducting business a majority vote of the council is required, except that at least 8 members of the council are required to vote affirmatively to recommend changes in the statutes or rules.

History: 2013 a. 270.



American Council of Engineering Companies of Wisconsin

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**Testimony of Jayne Martinko
American Council of Engineering Companies of Wisconsin
Before the Committee on Insurance, Housing, and Trade
Wisconsin State Senate
On SB 86
Renaming the Dwelling Code Council and Building Code Council
Madison, Wisconsin
May 13, 2015**

Good afternoon Chairman Lasee and members of the Committee. My name is Jayne Martinko and I am the Executive Director of the American Council of Engineering Companies of Wisconsin. I am here to offer testimony in favor SB 86, which renames the Dwelling Code Council and the Building Code Council.

The American Council of Engineering Companies of Wisconsin (ACEC WI) represents 79 premier engineering firms across the state of Wisconsin which employ thousands of professional engineers. These experts routinely consult Wisconsin's building codes to design and oversee the construction of building structures. Engineers interpret building codes to ensure buildings are designed and constructed to increase the safety and integrity of the structure.

Last session, ACEC WI supported passage of 2013 Act 270 which established a uniform commercial building code. Uniform codes help engineers uphold the same standards of professional responsibility across the state. It also facilitates business development by easing the regulatory burden in the development stage by promoting the same standards across the board.

The Commercial Building Code Council, which was created last legislative session, accurately reflects the interests of the professions that are represented on it. Two spots are reserved for design professionals, that is, architects, engineers and other designers. This allows the council to have flexibility in appointing applicants that are both knowledgeable and reflective of the many types of professions that work with these codes on a daily basis. These two council positions are currently balanced with representation from an architect and an engineer, each of which provide a special perspective from essential yet different fields. In the end, creation and revision of the code should be left to the experts on this council who represent all aspects of the design and construction process.

ACEC WI is supportive of SB 86. The bill simply clarifies that the building code council applies to commercial buildings. Further, we remain supportive of the current council membership that is equally balanced with membership from the many professions active in interpreting the code. Please consider supporting this piece of legislation as a sign of trust in the vital work our design professionals do every day.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 86.