



AGENDA MEMO

CITY COUNCIL MEETING DATE: May 1, 2013

DEPARTMENT: BUILDING AND SAFETY

ITEM DESCRIPTION: Discussion for possible action on the repeal or amendment of the 2009 International Energy Conservation Code as adopted by the City of Las Vegas on April 6, 2011, and possible future consideration of the 2012 International Energy Conservation Code - All Wards

In recent months, some members of the Council have been contacted by owners of businesses trying to locate in buildings in the downtown area of the city who have expressed concerns with the costs of meeting the 2009 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC). Several, but not all, of these businesses are on extremely limited budgets and are attempting to use older masonry buildings that lack of adequate heating and cooling systems. When heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems are introduced into the “adaptive re-use” of the building, the full requirements of the adopted Energy Conservation Code must be met, resulting in unanticipated expense. Further, there has been concern expressed about the purpose of building codes and how the IECC promotes a stated primary goal of the protection of public safety in our built environment. This concern also stems from a question of whether or not enough public debate ever occurred at the State or local level on the impact or necessity of adopting an energy conservation code that requires levels of energy efficiency to be imposed upon existing buildings and new construction.

The suite of international codes is published on a three- year cycle by the International Code Council. This three-year cycle is a highly participatory and collaborative process of building officials from around the world and the United States, as well as many industry groups, including legal representatives, environmental groups, health and safety officials, fire officials, National Association of Homebuilders, National Organization of General Contractors, testing laboratories and listing agencies such the Underwriters Laboratories. Anyone who wishes to participate can attend the hundreds of public code meetings to introduce changes to all of the codes, including the IECC, to vet the need for these changes, and to provide a balance between costs of the provisions of the codes and the ability to construct buildings in an economic manner that is profitable to the business owners and construction industry.

The City has adopted energy codes since 1995. In 2005, the City adopted the 2003 IECC; in 2007, the 2006 IECC; and 2011, the 2009 IECC was adopted. Between the International Code Council’s publication of the 2006 and 2009 codes, the United States Energy Department asked the ICC to use its collaborative process to develop an energy code that would reduce the energy consumption of the buildings in the United States by 30 percent by the year 2020. This was coupled with a commitment that if such a code was not developed by ICC, the Energy Department would create a National Energy Code at the federal level. This process would mirror the creation of the energy efficient requirements in combustible engine vehicles for the automobile industry and the federal guidelines for handicap accessibility. Thus the ICC developed standards in the 2009 IECC that provided a 12 percent reduction in buildings’ energy consumption throughout the nation and the remaining 18 percent reduction is anticipated to be accomplished in the 2012 code. These energy efficiency standards are met primarily by insulation factors of the building envelope (four walls and roof structure) for a building and the glazing (glass used in doors and windows) of the exterior of the building.