



STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS
ASSOCIATION OF UTAH

January 31, 2012

To: Committee Members
House Business and Labor Standing Committee

Re: HB 305

Dear Committee Members:

P.O. Box 581292
Salt Lake City, Utah 84158-1292

David Pierson, *President*
Chris Kimball, *Vice President/President Elect*
Wm. Chris Barker, *Past President*
Michael S. Linford, *Treasurer*
Dorian Adams, *Secretary/Historian*
Jay Adams, *Member of the Board/UEC Delegate*
Curtis Earl, *Member of the Board/UEC Delegate Elect*

The Structural Engineers Association of Utah (SEAU) represents a significant portion of the structural engineers licensed to practice in the State of Utah.

SEAU wishes to express our opposition to HB 305. The language as it currently exists in the State Building Code is the result of much work back in the 1980's and 1990's. At that time, the interests of all parties (owners, developers, engineers and contractors) were considered, and the provisions as they currently stand were considered to be a good compromise. Yes, this is an upgrade provision tied to a maintenance trigger, but that was the whole purpose of the compromise.

The provision as it currently stands mandates certain measures be taken when an owner chooses to do certain repairs to his/her building. The costs of these mandates are comparable to the cost of mandates imposed by the building code on new construction for seismic safety. The single biggest risk factor to unreinforced masonry buildings, in the event of an earthquake, is the lack of connection of the roof and floors to the walls. Inadequate connections can result in partial or complete collapse of the building. Falling parapets and other appendages create risks for people who never even enter the building. This has been seen over and over in earthquakes around the world. The provisions that this amendment proposes to modify address this major risk factor and are important in protecting the lives of the public.

SEAU did a quick survey of engineers and roofing contractors to determine the costs associated with this provision. In general, the average cost of the engineering portion of this provision is about \$750. A general rule of thumb for the actual compliance costs would be \$3 to \$4 per square foot of roof area. Typical reroofing costs vary from \$5 to \$10 per square foot, depending on the materials, etc.

On another note, the proper way for changes to be made to the State Building Code is to vet those changes through the Uniform Building Codes Commission. That commission annually gives recommendations to the Business and Labor Interim Committee, which then considers those recommendations and prepares bills for consideration by the Legislature. When SB 211 passed in 2009, those of us interested in the state construction codes were assured that the legislature would always, at the very least, get a recommendation from the UBC Commission prior to voting on bills that amend the construction code. This process should not be circumvented.

Please do not allow changes to be made to these critical provisions of the State Building Code.

Sincerely:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. L. Pierson', written in a cursive style.

David L. Pierson, SE
President, SEAU