

City of Philadelphia



Council of the City of Philadelphia
Office of the Chief Clerk
Room 402, City Hall
Philadelphia

(Resolution No. 160787)

RESOLUTION

Calling on the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to amend the Act of November 10, 1999, known as the "Pennsylvania Construction Code Act" to exempt Cities of the First Class and further allow for Cities of the First Class to adopt their own Construction Codes.

WHEREAS, The Pennsylvania Construction Code Act has not been updated to a modern code since 2009; and

WHEREAS, The reason for this relates to issues and debates surrounding residential construction of detached and semi-detached homes; and

WHEREAS, Construction within the City of Philadelphia is primarily commercial with most of its residential construction regulated under commercial building codes because of height and density factors; and

WHEREAS, The failure to modernize the building code for the City of Philadelphia is seen as an increased risk to safety and hazard mitigation by the insurance industry and the Federal Emergency Management Agency; and

WHEREAS, Confusion surrounding the Pennsylvania Uniform Construction Code delays the approval of development projects which negatively impacts jobs and tax revenues. Confusion wastes resources that are better applied to focus on building safety; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia stands as a major metropolitan area with booming commercial development that requires application of a clear set of modern construction standards; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia demands the greatest energy efficiencies offered by modern codes for the sustainability of the City; and

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WHEREAS, Philadelphia requires unique and specific modifications of national codes to control public safety in its dense urban environment as evidenced by City Council's numerous changes regarding demolitions and public protections; and

WHEREAS, Prior to the UCC, Philadelphia maintained a modern building code with responsible amendments that were responsive to its citizens and enforced by a fully trained and certified staff at the Department of Licenses & Inspections (L&I); and

WHEREAS, Under the current situation, the many additional inspectors being hired by L&I, as approved by City Council, need to be trained and certified. But the certification exams are based upon the 2012 or 2015 International Codes. While the UCC will require them to enforce the 2009 International Codes thus confusing new inspectors and wasting thousands of dollars on training in two codes; and

WHEREAS, Appeals regarding accessibility which, prior to the UCC were handled by a local appeals board comprised of local knowledgeable people, are now heard in Harrisburg; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Calls on the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to amend the Act of November 10, 1999, known as the "Pennsylvania Construction Code Act" to exempt Cities of the First Class and further allow for Cities of the First Class to adopt their own Construction Codes.

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CERTIFICATION: This is a true and correct copy of the original Resolution, Adopted by the Council of the City of Philadelphia on the fifteenth of September, 2016.

Darrell L. Clarke
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Michael A. Decker
CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmember Henon

Sponsored by: Councilmembers Henon, Domb, Taubenberger, Jones, Green, Johnson, Quiñones Sánchez and Squilla