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### **BuildStrong Coalition Backs Safe Building Code Incentive Act**

(Washington, DC – June 1, 2011) – The BuildStrong Coalition today urged passage of H.R. 2069, The Safe Building Code Incentive Act, introduced by Congressmen Mario Diaz-Balart (R-FL), Albio Sires (D-NJ) and Richard Hanna (R-NY). The bill encourages states to adopt and enforce stronger building codes to better protect homes and buildings during natural disasters.

“Stronger, safer homes and buildings can save lives, mitigate property loss and save taxpayer money by reducing the amount of public disaster aid needed to rebuild. Congressmen Diaz-Balart, Sires and Hanna are to be commended for introducing this important legislation, said coalition Chairman Jimi Grande.

The Safe Building Code Incentive Act will create a financial incentive for states to adopt and enforce recognized model building codes. Under the proposed law, states that adopt and enforce recognized model building codes for residential and commercial structures would qualify for an additional four percent of funding available for post-disaster grants. The program would be administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Model building codes can help protect homes and buildings from hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, floods, fire, ice and other natural catastrophes. According to a National Institute of Building Sciences’ study, for every \$1 spent to make buildings stronger, the nation saves \$4 dollars in disaster-related costs.

The Louisiana State University (LSU) Hurricane Center estimated that strong building codes would have reduced wind damage from Katrina by 80 percent, saving \$8 billion. LSU also estimated that strong building codes would have reduced economic damages in Mississippi from a Katrina-level hurricane by \$3.1 billion.

In addition to saving lives and reducing property loss, statewide building codes based on recognized standards protect the environment from waste caused by rebuilding after a disaster.

16 states have taken this common sense approach and currently enforce existing building codes that would qualify already for the additional four percent funding. Another 15 states would qualify with minor changes to current laws and regulations.

“The key is standardized building codes that promote a level and consistent playing field for design professionals, suppliers and builders and creating a minimum standard upon which consumers can rely,” Grande said.

BuildStrong will conduct a nationwide campaign urging enactment of The Safe Building Code Incentive Act. This bill would provide powerful incentives to state governments to “BuildStrong” and save American lives and taxpayer money. The advocacy campaign will educate Congress, state policymakers, the media and homeowners about the critical importance of strong building codes.

*BuildStrong is a coalition of national business and consumer organizations, corporations and emergency management officials dedicated to stronger building codes, in order to protect homes and building from the devastation of natural disasters. For a complete list of members and additional information, please visit [www.buildstrongamerica.com](http://www.buildstrongamerica.com).*