

RAC Update

December 2015

Bobby Cleveland, Chairman

Jim Brown, Vice-Chair

Construction Codes

No New Codes for 2016 - Statement from DCA

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) states that there will be no new code editions or amendments to the Georgia Minimum Standard Construction Codes in 2016. DCA has also decided that Georgia plans to adopt the 2018 ICC codes in lieu of the 2015 editions. At this time, DCA has not determined what the next steps will be in regards to adoption of a new Energy Code edition.

REMINDER: New Span Tables for Southern Pine will go into effect in January 2016. HBAG successfully lobbied for a 1 year delay in implementation to allow all truss manufacturers and other suppliers to have inventory updated and available. This is the only code change for 2016.

State Codes Advisory Committee (SCAC) – Tim Williams, HBAG Past President, was reappointed to the SCAC by DCA Commissioner, Camilla Knowles, representing the residential construction industry for another 2-year term. HBAG has benefited greatly from Tim's knowledge and leadership on the SCAC. The first SCAC meeting for 2016 is January 7 at 10 AM at DCA.

Wildland Urban Interface Code - HBAG was successful in getting the State Codes Advisory Committee (SCAC) to recommend NOT moving forward with the 2012 International Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Code as a permissive code for local governments to adopt to mitigate damage from forest fires. SCAC issued a statement that this code is "not right for Georgia." The WUI has been adopted by the State Fire Marshal as a part of the Fire Regulations. This permissive code contains provisions addressing fire spread, construction materials, access roads, site development, water supply and more for buildings constructed near or in "forested" areas. It would be very costly and is in conflict with many environmental rules such as tree ordinances and water plans. HBAG is concerned that it could be used as a tool to stop growth. HBAG developed a tool kit that includes illustrations showing how a site would be negatively impacted at each level identified in the WUI code. Although HBAG has made great progress, it is still in the Fire Regulations. HBAG continues to work with the State Fire Marshal and others to demonstrate that the WUI is dangerous and not the right tool for Georgia. Contact HBAG immediately if "Fire Wise" or updates to the hazardous mitigation plans are being discussed in your community. HBAG has the tools to assist you. Thanks to Tim Williams, Neal Davis and Bettie Sleeth for their efforts.

Environmental Issues

New “Green Book” Issued –Transition Period -The Manual for Erosion and Sediment Control in Georgia has been revised and revisions will become effective January 1, 2016. Revisions include the addition of new Best Management Practices (BMPs), as well as a process to include new BMP’s in the Manual for Erosion and Sediment Control. This process for joining the Equivalent BMP List is found in Appendix A-2 of the Manual.

The Georgia Soil and Water Commission (GSWCC) recognizes the need for a transition period to allow individuals time to understand and begin implementing the new requirements. As part of this transition period, for a 6 month period, beginning January 1, 2016 and ending June 30, 2016, GSWCC will recognize the Fifth and Sixth Edition of the Manual along with the 2016 edition.

All plans which were completed and sealed prior to July 1, 2016 may utilize the products and practices as specified in the Manual (Fifth and Sixth Editions). These may include previously approved plans with revisions, plans which had not been previously approved but were in the review process, or new plan submittals created prior to July 1st 2016. Any plans received on or after July 1, 2016 are to utilize the new Manual (2016 Edition).

During this 6 month transition period plans should not be denied solely for minor inconsistencies, such as incorrect codes.

If you have any questions please contact Ben Ruzowicz or Brady Hart at 706-552-447

Clean Water Act – BUILDERS APPLAUD COURT RULING SUSPENDING EPA WATER RULE.

HBAG has worked diligently with NAHB, State regulatory agencies and partners on this issue. It has finally paid off. The Sixth Circuit has just stayed the rule nationwide both merits grounds and procedural grounds. The order is, “The Clean Water Rule is hereby STAYED, nationwide, pending further order of the court.

The proposed rule by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and U.S. Army Corps Engineers (Corps) redefining the scope of waters protected under the Clean Water. Virtually anything could be a “tributary” if it is determined to have a bed, bank and an ordinary high-water mark could erroneously include manmade ditches, pipes, canals, dams, groundwater and isolated wetlands. Currently a “tributary” must have some nexus to navigable waters.

NAHB and HBAG were joined in the opposition to this flawed rule by many other groups involved in or affected by construction as well as many state governments and even the agricultural community.

Everyone want clean water to drink and for recreational purposes. HBAG joins our partners in urging EPA to start over and develop a more meaningful and balanced rule that reflects the spirit of the Clean Water Act.

HBAG is working with NAHB and our Georgia Congressional Delegation on legislation to clarify the intent of the Clean Water Act and other remedies to prevent this type of overreach by USEPA.