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WABO
PO Box 7310
Olympia, WA 98507-7310
(360) 628-8669
wabo@wabo.org
www.wabo.org

Administered By
J Addison Group, LLC
Olympia, Washington

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President Steven Jones
International Code Council
500 New Jersey Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20001

Dear President Jones:

We are writing to express our concerns about ICC's proposed Preferred Provider program. According to the ICC website, *"The use of Preferred Provider or ICC training is now required as a condition of all certification renewals."* If this is so, when are ICC Chapters going to receive the details on how the program works?

While we agree with the overall goals stated in the ICC published materials, we have concerns in three principal areas: the program development process, the effect of the program on chapter training programs, and the program details.

I. Program Development Process

We believe the program development process was not transparent. We know there was a "Stakeholder Committee" established to review a draft proposal, but understand they were only given an extremely limited time to review program details and submit comments prior to the meetings. In addition, the comments were to be submitted only in writing and committee members were not allowed to discuss the comments at the teleconferenced meetings. We also understand that committee members were told they could not share any details of the proposal with others, which made it difficult for a committee member who is supposed to represent an organization. This air of secrecy does not lend itself to any perception that the process was open and transparent.

WABO, like many of the larger chapters in ICC, has a large stake in this process and it only makes sense to include the chapters with well-attended educational institutes in the decision making process. One of our members was assured by Dominic Sims that WABO would be included in the development process, but we were not contacted to participate in any way. We were extremely disappointed to learn that a committee was chosen and has finished working on the program.

II. Effect on Chapter Training Programs

Despite the assurances of ICC regarding the program, WABO believes the Preferred Provider program will have a negative effect on ICC chapter training programs. WABO generates revenue to support member activities and services through our Annual Education Institute. This is an event with up to 16 class offerings in four tracks over the four days of the Institute, serving over 900 individual attendees. Many of our members depend heavily on the Institute to provide them with CEUs to help maintain their ICC certifications. Having to hire Preferred Providers or ICC trainers is going to raise our costs. We are then faced with the choice of absorbing these expenses or passing the additional costs on to the attendees. We know we can become a Preferred Provider, but as discussed below, some of the details of the proposed program will not work well with how we conduct our Institute.

WABO is fortunate enough to be in a position to absorb or pass on some of the extra costs for our Institute, however, we believe smaller chapters will not be so fortunate. Many of them are entirely dependent on providing training events to generate the revenue to continue their activities. Having to pay to become a Preferred Provider or having to hire PP trainers will significantly impact their revenues.

III. Program Details

From what we understand, many of the details of the PP program are unclear or not workable. For example, a PP (individual or chapter) will be required to submit course materials to ICC for review and approval. ICC will respond in 10 days to approve the content, at which time the course can be advertised as being part of the PP program. However, what happens if the course is disapproved? What is the remedy for the chapter?

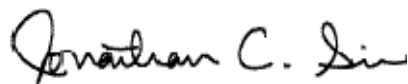
Aside from our concern that ICC will not be able to provide adequate staffing to approve course materials in a timely fashion, this requirement for preapproval of course materials directly impacts the WABO Annual Education Institute in several ways.

- It is not clear what needs to be submitted for review. Is it a one-paragraph course description, the entire course outline, or the actual Powerpoint presentation? The higher the level of detail required, the harder it will be to get courses approved in time to advertise them as PP classes, since many of our volunteer instructors are working on the details up to the last minute.
- There are no published criteria by which the course material will be judged to be adequate. This leads to uncertainty on whether a particular course will be approved, which then leads to the timing issues mentioned in the bullet above. This also has the potential to lead to a reduction in the flexibility we have in the courses being offered at the Institute. Rather than risk having ICC disapprove a course that would perfectly suit our needs, we might have to opt for a canned course from the preapproved ICC list that is not customized for our members and, therefore, less relevant.
- Courses submitted for PP approval essentially become public property—there is no protection for an author's work. Anyone can pick them up and use the course materials, unless the author takes the time and expense to copyright the materials.

The official information ICC is releasing says the PP program is going to be rolled out in October. We have discussed what we know of the program with other ICC chapters and have heard many other questions and concerns. Before ICC releases the program as a "done deal," we believe the final draft should be released to the ICC membership for comments. If there is a significant lack of support for it from the members, we believe the program should be significantly reworked or cancelled.

We are willing to work with ICC to improve the program to better reflect the stated goals without impacting the educational and financial needs of the member chapters and look forward to hearing back from you. Please feel free to contact me if you have questions or wish to discuss this important issue.

Sincerely,



Jonathan C. Siu, PE, SE, ACO
President

cc: Guy Tomberlin
Dominic Sims
Kraig Stevenson