Code Review of Federal and Interstate Construction Projects

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Five Possible Approaches

- State Jurisdiction
- Separate Federal Agency
- Federal Code Appeals Board
- Peer Review
- Privatization
Current Practice: Agency Picks Code

- BOCA
- ICBO
- SBCCI
- NFPA
- Local provisions
Current Practice: Agency Enforces Code
Current Practice: Agency Responsibilities

- Program
- Budget
- Schedule
- Quality oversight of design & construction
- Safety
Do these conflicting responsibilities affect public safety?
Five Possible Solutions

I. State Jurisdiction
II. Separate Federal Agency
III. Federal Code Appeals Board
IV. Peer Review
V. Privatization
I. State Jurisdiction

Submit for a permit like everyone else
I. State Jurisdiction: Advantages

• Capitalizes on existing system of review
• Capitalizes on existing system of delivery
• Relatively inexpensive
• Most familiarity with local climate and site conditions
I. State Jurisdiction: Disadvantages

- Not well-suited for unique federal agency requirements
- Limited capacity and expertise
- Requires familiarity with varying code requirements
- Culture shock to federal agencies.
II. Separate Federal Agency

• Tasked with code standards enforcement

• Review and approval of all projects
II. Separate Federal Agency: Advantages

- Reflects federal special needs
- Potential for national standards
- Limited culture shock
- May attract bureaucratic sponsor
II. Separate Federal Agency: Disadvantages

- Expensive
- Time to implement
- Potential bottleneck
- Remote from construction
- Turf battles
III. Federal Code Appeals Board

• Independent of any agency
• Designer or agency asks for review
• Binding decisions
III. Federal Code Appeals Board: Advantages

- Few changes in federal procedures
- Inexpensive
- Reduces chance of a bottleneck
- Limited culture shock
- Well understood by project participants
- Might improve agency performance
III. Federal Code Appeals Board: Disadvantages

- Requires designer to appeal
- Not every project reviewed
IV. Peer Review

• Agency process unchanged
• Third party reviewer part of project team
• Report made within agency
IV. Peer Review: Advantages

• Delivery process unchanged
• Inexpensive
• No bottleneck
• Secure
• Avoids culture shock
IV. Peer Review: Disadvantages

• Review within agency
• Peer reviewer part of project team
V. Privatization

- All construction by private parties
- Turnkey
- Design/build
- CM-at-risk
- State/local review
V. Privatization: Advantages

• Capitalizes on existing system of review
• Capitalizes on existing system of delivery
• Relatively inexpensive
• Most familiarity with local climate and site conditions
• Avoids culture shock
V. Privatization: Disadvantages

• Not well-suited for unique federal agency requirements
• Limited capacity and expertise
• Requires familiarity with varying code requirements
V. Privatization: Other Issues

- Economic efficiency
- Labor relations
- Design quality assurance
Questions and Next Steps