

National Construction Safety Team Advisory Committee
National Institute of Standards & Technology

The Honorable Carlos M. Gutierrez
Secretary of Commerce
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I am pleased to submit the 2006 Annual Report of the National Construction Safety Team Advisory Committee (NCSTAC) of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). The Committee serves as NIST's advisor on implementation of the National Construction Safety Team (NCST) Act (P.L. 107-231) and our report reflects our views as an independent, private sector body. Because no new NCST investigations were undertaken in 2006, this letter report constitutes our entire report for this year.

The Committee met once during 2006 by public teleconference to review the progress to date on the Dissemination and Technical Assistance Program (DTAP) and the proposed plans for continuing the investigation of the collapse of World Trade Center 7 (WTC 7), the third building involved in the September 11, 2001 disaster and to receive comments from the public on the content of the Committee's 2006 Report to Congress.

Two Committee members resigned during the year reducing membership to seven individuals. In discussion with the then-Director of the Building and Fire Research Laboratory (BFRL), the Chair agreed that new appointees would not be considered until after the completion of the WTC 7 investigation and/or the beginning of a new safety team investigation where specific technical expertise was required. All other Committee members whose terms were expiring accepted reappointment.

The investigation of the collapse of the two towers, WTC 1 and WTC 2, were completed and presented to the public in the late summer of 2005. Since then, in accordance with the plans developed three years ago under DTAP, NIST staff have been working with various public sector Codes and Standards organizations and the National Institute of Building Science (NIBS) in affecting construction changes in the nation's building codes and architectural and structural engineering practice groups.

The Committee believes that the NCST Act's unique features such as subpoena power, open communication with the engineering and architectural communities during an investigation and the commitment to support the development of improved Codes and Standards through DTAP provide a powerful public service. Although not used in the WTC or Station nightclub investigations (for different reasons), subpoena power can provide NIST leverage in conducting safety team investigations where litigation or political concerns might prevent access to the disaster site or to necessary forensic evidence and witnesses. Perhaps more significantly, Safety Team investigations to date have stirred early, open public discussions on both the WTC and Station investigations. Many improvements were made to

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existing codes and standards even before the investigations were concluded. Subsequent to the release of the final investigation reports, wide-ranging reviews have been undertaken of significant engineering, architectural, safety and fire protection practices with promising results.

The Committee remains concerned that several of the recommendations made in its previous Reports to Congress for permanent funding for Safety Team investigations has not been acted on. The Committee re-affirms its opinion that NIST cannot effectively implement its role under the Act unless Congress and the Administration establish sustained support. The Committee strongly believes sustained funding is justified given the proven impact and actions the private sector has undertaken as a direct result of NIST findings of the WTC Tower and Station nightclub investigations and urges Congress to provide such support in FY 2007.

Sincerely,



Paul M. Fitzgerald, Chair
National Construction Safety Team Advisory Committee

John M. Barsom, Member
Robert D. Hanson, Member
Forman A. Williams, Member

Committee Members Not Participating in the Drafting of this Report

David S. Collins, Member
Kathleen J. Tierney, Member
Charles Thornton, Member

cc: D. Sampson
R. Cresanti
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