

NEW HAMPSHIRE BUILDING OFFICIALS ASSOCIATION

Established in 1965



53 Regional, Suite 1
Concord, NH 03301
(603) 228-1231

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Representative Robert Rowe
Chair, House Judiciary Committee
Room 208 Legislative Office Building
33 N State St
Concord, NH 03301

Re: House Bill 292

Representative Rowe,

On behalf of the New Hampshire Building Officials Association I wish to offer our **support of House Bill 292.**

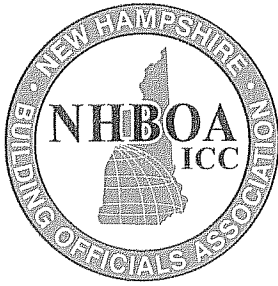
Before the judiciary review committee is **House Bill 292**, a proposal to amend RSA 580 intending to provide necessary liability protection to volunteer members of a recently formed response team. This response team that will aid many local and state agencies during declared disasters. **HB 292** proposes protections for New Hampshire architects and engineers that have an expertise vital in the initial assessment stages after a disaster. The proposal will help protect those architects and engineers that volunteer their time and have further taken it upon themselves to obtain additional training in order to work cooperatively with Emergency Managers, Building Code Officials and Fire Officials to assess the safety of buildings after a disaster.

In recent years the State of New Hampshire has seen an increased number of natural and man-made disasters where building and fire officials can easily be overwhelmed by the magnitude of the disaster and the volume of damaged buildings that need to be assessed. Several severe floods and damage caused by wind storms and hurricanes have stressed many communities to their limits when a rapid assessment of buildings has been necessary. Storms over the past 10 years or more have shown a need for more trained individuals to conduct these assessments in order to allow people to return to their homes and businesses more quickly and start the recovery process. Building assessments after major events should take days, not weeks or months.

Most communities in our state do not have the number of trained personnel to conduct a rapid assessment of buildings after a major storm event. In response to a need, a newly formed response task force made up of New Hampshire licensed architects and engineers is intended to work cooperatively with our state emergency managers, as well as building and fire officials to assist in performing rapid assessments. The task force is made up of volunteers with a particular expertise that are willing to help when our communities need it most.

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What **HB 292** does is provide protection from liability **only** when these volunteers are working with our responders immediately after a major event where multiple buildings may be damaged. **HB 292** does not provide a “blanket” protection from liability when architects and engineers are performing their every day roles.

The New Hampshire Building Officials Association respectfully asks for the support of the House Judiciary Committee in making **House Bill 292** a reality and amending RSA 508 to include New Hampshire licensed architects and engineers and provide them with similar protection of our other emergency responders.

Respectfully,

Carrie Rouleau-Cote, President
New Hampshire Building Officials Association
nhboa@comcast.net

sent via email to housejudiciarycommittee@leg.state.nh.us