



Position Statement

Amendment to Arkansas Code Concerning Earthquake Resistant Design for Public Structures

The Structural Engineers Association of Arkansas serves as the state voice for practicing structural engineers to protect the public's right to safe, sustainable and cost effective buildings and other structures.

In response to Senate Bill 5, a proposed amendment to Arkansas Code 12-80-104 concerning earthquake resistant design for public structures, the Structural Engineers Association of Arkansas has adopted the following position statements:

1. The 2012 Arkansas Fire Prevention Code and the supporting documents represent the current best design practices to ensure public safety within the State of Arkansas. These documents serve to provide a minimum level of safety to the general public in regards to the design of buildings and other structures.
2. The 2012 Arkansas Fire Prevention Code and supporting documents are the accumulation of countless hours of research and deliberation by highly specialized experts, engineers, and industry representatives. The provisions within the 2012 Arkansas Fire Prevention Code should not be overridden without careful consideration to the safety of the general public.
3. The proposed bill could result in a significant decrease to the seismic design values and result in a substantially under-designed structure when compared to the current industry design standards. These structures may pose a significant risk to building occupants under the current design level earthquake.
4. The 2012 Arkansas Fire Prevention Code contains overall lower seismic design values for the state of Arkansas than the previous code. The new code design values are no longer solely based on the Maximum Considered Earthquake. The values are based on Risk and consider the likelihood a structure will see an earthquake.
5. The proposed bill would further reduce the seismic design values below the values used in previous versions of the building code.
6. In the interest of public safety, the Structural Engineers Association of Arkansas recommends that the 2012 Arkansas Fire Prevention code remain unchanged.

Approved by the Structural Engineers Association of Arkansas Executive Committee on May 18, 2016.