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# Forbes Defends It

## Why A State Building Code?

By TIM RICHARD

State Rep. Joseph Forbes says he is getting two kinds of flak over his sponsorship of a state uniform construction code.

One source is arch-conservatives who are against any government activity, period. (There may be some racial bias involved because Forbes' bill would aid the modular housing industry and "create a better climate for low-cost housing.")

The other source is some members of the Michigan Municipal League who see state legislation as an infringement on the home rule powers of cities.



*A uniform state construction code "will create a better climate for low-cost housing" and make Michigan's manufactured housing industry more competitive.*

—Rep. Joseph Forbes

construction law was based on the 19th century New York tenement law.

THE MUNICIPAL League wanted an opt-out system whereby cities and villages could adopt their own ordinances; later it tried for a "grandfather" clause under which local units' existing codes could be retained.

Instead, the House bill allows local units to exempt themselves if they adopt another "nationally recognized model building code" and "only if it would promote regional uniformity," said Forbes.

He cited four or five model codes drawn up by building officials as possible options. Forbes said the state building code commission would itself adopt a national code rather than try to write its own — a task that took New York State six years and \$8 million to accomplish.

Forbes predicted the bill could have a great impact on the housing shortage by relieving one source of cost pressure. He also predicted it would make Michigan's modular housing industry more competitive. The bill allows for reciprocity between

states and wouldn't restrict certification of out-of-state products.

Forbes' bill is now in the State affairs committee of the Senate. Favoring it are Gov. Milliken, Democratic Sen. Coleman, Young and GOP Senate leader Robert VanderLaan.

Sitting in the audience was Livonia Councilman Edward Milligan, himself a house builder. Milligan said he likes the bill. The provision allowing local units to opt-out for a different national code wasn't good, he commented, but was an acceptable compromise under the political circumstances.

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Democrat Forbes, himself the former mayor of Oak Park, understands this type of thinking but doesn't buy it in this case. He says the benefits of a uniform state system outweigh any harm to the home rule principle.

FORBES' BILL passed the House 34 to 23 late last year and is now in the State Senate. The freshman lawmaker, whose district includes the east side of Southfield, was at the Raleigh House last week to speak to the Builders Assn. of

Metropolitan Detroit. Forbes says builders are in favor of his bill.

Under Forbes' bill, the state would adopt a standard construction code that would take precedence over local codes. A nine-member commission in the Dept. of Labor would draw up the code and rule on applications from local governments for amendments.

Forbes quoted the National Commission on Urban Problems as saying there are

a "plethora" of code by minor political jurisdictions across the U.S.

The commission would attempt to "eliminate restrictive, obsolete, conflicting and unnecessary construction regulations that tend to increase construction costs unnecessarily, to retard the use of new materials, products or methods..." in the language of the bill. It would test new methods and materials.

Forbes said Michigan's 1917

# Money More Plentiful

Housing builders got some cheerful news for the first six months of 1972. Mortgage funds are becoming increasingly available to buyers.

The report came from William W. Dwire, a vice president and head of the mortgage department of National Bank of Detroit. He was a speaker at last week's dinner meeting of the Builders Assn. of Metropolitan Detroit in the Raleigh House, Southfield.

Saying it was impossible to

see beyond the first six months of the new year, Dwire reported on the prospects of various kinds of lenders:

- Life insurance companies are allocating 25 to 40 per cent more than in the same period of 1971 for long-term investments in income-producing properties. Rates will be 8.25 per cent and up.

- The insurance companies are "actively seeking good loans." Interest rates probably won't soften, but terms may be better.

Many are interested in joint

ventures in the real estate field, and Dwire told the builders "they make excellent partners."

- Savings and loan companies have had "record deposit growth." It is slowing at the moment but still satisfactory.

Rates will be 7.5 per cent and up. Terms are relatively easy, and loans are being made for 80 to 90 per cent of appraised value.

- Commercial banks "may emerge from the doldrums" if they can compete successfully

for deposits. They found loan demand "disappointing" in 1971, but there's a "very good outlook" for the first half of '72. Rates are 7.25 per cent and up.

Banks find a great demand from outstate banks, where deposit growth has been slow.

- Mortgage bankers, dealing in FHA and VA loans and acting as correspondents for insurance companies, have readily available funds but are charging 3.5 to 5 points.

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