

New Council to Focus on Sustainability in Disaster Response

February 17th, 2016. Washington, DC. Today the Sustainable Disaster Response Council (SDRC) announced it will recruit an inaugural board and advisory council to help guide how the organization delivers its mission to promote sustainability in disaster response and property restoration - helping American homes, businesses and communities turn every loss into smart investments in a stronger, safer, healthier and environmentally responsible future.

“Each year, insurers, property owners and governments spend billions of dollars responding to fires, floods and other localized and large-scale loss events” said SDRC President Steve Bushnell, who served on the US Green Building Council’s board from 2012-2015 and is a 40-year veteran of the insurance industry, where he developed some of the first policies that recognize and incentivize the benefits of building and rebuilding to the latest energy and environmental standards. “We hope to influence how this money is spent by developing standards for what makes property restoration itself, as well as the involved products and services, truly sustainable” added Steve, noting the example of how the LEED standard continues to transform the building sector. In addition to standards development and associated professional education and accreditation, SDRC will focus on research and advocacy to connect the dots between disaster response and existing agendas for infrastructure, energy & the environment, public health, and other priorities. “When disasters strike, the response seems to focus too narrowly on the speed and cost of recovery. Of course that’s important, but we shouldn’t overlook win-win opportunities to secure other benefits for property owners and occupants, the environment and the economy ” added Bushnell, who founded California-based Stephen Bushnell & Associates to advise clients on the intersection of sustainability and risk management.

The newly formed Board and Advisory Council will draw from SDRC’s diverse members and stakeholders, including disaster response and property restoration firms, large property owners and managers, the architecture, engineering and construction community, the insurance sector and experts from industry trades, NGOs, academia and government. “I think we’re going to find a lot of overlapping interest in our mission, and diverse voices that can shape our work this year as we prepare for our first annual summit in November” said Stefan Mueller, SRDC Vice President and Managing Director at SEM Advisors, a Washington-DC based consulting firm that administers the SDRC and has been involved in numerous coalitions involving the insurance and real estate sectors, federal state and local governments, and environmental NGOs.

About SDRC:

The Sustainable Disaster Response Council brings together leading voices from industry, government and civil society to define, validate and advocate for sustainability in disaster response. Visit www.sustainableresponse.org.