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September 29, 2006

Mr. Dean Born
Director, Dept. of Building Safety
City of Slidell
P.O. Box 828
Slidell, Louisiana 70459

RE: St. Tammany Parish Administrative Complex
520 Old Spanish Trail
Slidell, Louisiana 70458

Dear Mr. Born,

The St. Tammany Parish Administrative Complex in Slidell is a six story (height to top floor less than 66 ft.) non-combustible building with concrete floors. It presently has two exterior stairways (open to the elements) used as emergency exits. The floors have approximately 10'-4" vertical distance between slabs. This allows approximately 9' ceilings in the offices and 8'-6" in the hallways.

As you know, Hurricane Katrina damaged the building extensively and we are doing a complete renovation to the building, under the 2003 International Building Code. In doing so, the air conditioning system is being upgraded to include fresh air requirements not required when the existing system was installed.

This existing method of returning the air to the air handler on each floor is via the hallway (an access corridor) which ws an approved method in the Southern Building Code. The problem is that under the new IBC (1016.4) Exit Access Corridors cannot be used for a return air duct. In our case, using only an 8'-6" ceiling height in the hall and installing supply ducts and other required items in the space above the hall ceiling, there is insufficient cross sectional area left in the space above the ceiling to use it as a return air duct.

We propose that the following solution be approved by the City of Slidell.

We will install both a sprinkler system and a fire detection and alarm system throughout the building. The fire detection system will shut down the A/C system upon detection of smoke on that floor. With this feature, which is already required by code, and the sprinkler system that makes the entire floor a safe area, we feel that the intent of IBC 1016.4 has been satisfied.

We will also install new enclosed two-hour rated stairwells that will have positive pressure, to ensure that no smoke enters the stairwell. The existing stand pipe system will be extended to provide connections in the stairwell.

I spoke with the Fire Marshal's office regarding this variance and was told that since this is only an IBC issue, only the City of Slidell need approve the exception. We ask that the above exception be approved now, so that we can complete the design.

Thank you, in advance, for your help and consideration of this matter. If you have any questions, or require any further information, please feel free to call.

Sincerely,

Emmett G. (Pete) Dammon, P.E.

Approved: _____ Date: 10/9/06

Dean Born
Director, Dept. of Bldg. Safety
City of Slidell

xc: Mr. Bruce Crouch/St. Tammany Parish