

Travelers Launches Coastal Insurance Pilot Program for Fortified Homes

EcoHomeMagazine.com

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December 8, 2009

For many homeowners in coastal regions, options for affordable wind insurance are limited or even non-existent. Insurance provider Travelers Cos. and its Travelers Institute arm is looking to relieve that burden with a new program aimed at better-built coastal housing and providing coverage for it.

As part of the Travelers Coastal Hurricane Wind Zone Plan, a set of legislative principles designed to create a stable, market-based insurance system for coastal areas, the company would underwrite wind insurance for homes fortified to resist tropical storm and hurricane winds. Though the standard requirements have not been finalized, they likely will be based on those outlined by the Institute for Business & Home Safety at www.disastersafety.org. The pilot will take place in two unnamed states and will eventually expand to most of the others along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts

“We heard from many local regulators and insurance agents that there is still an unavailability and affordability crisis in many of our coastal communities,” Eric Nelson, vice president of personal insurance for Travelers, tells EcoHome. “We’re trying to step up and provide leadership to fill an urgent void in the marketplace.”

Nelson says there are only about 5,000 fortified homes in the U.S. today; yet, FEMA estimates for every dollar spent on mitigation, damages can be reduced by \$4. “We really need builders to think about this as a marketing opportunity ... [an opportunity] for them to go out and differentiate themselves.”

For more information on Travelers’ Wind Zone Plan, visit www.coastalplan.com.