

Talking Points for Communications with Mayors

WHY MAYORS MUST ACT NOW:

The International Code Council (ICC) is currently in the process of developing its 2009 model building and energy codes, which will guide energy efficiency standards for an estimated 3 million homes and buildings that will be constructed through 2012.

Because building codes are an area largely under municipal purview, mayors have a unique opportunity to strike a *significant blow for America's energy security* by ensuring that their cities attend the ICC's September meeting in Minneapolis and that their delegations support at least a 30% improvement in building energy efficiency over 2006 model codes.

GOAL:

Unite the nation's mayors to act now in support of strengthening the 2009 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) by at least 30% over the 2006 code and in opposition to proposals that weaken the IECC.

OBJECTIVES:

- Urge mayors to send delegations (including code and other municipal officials) to attend the September ICC meeting in Minneapolis and to vote in favor of the strongest energy efficiency provisions before that body (including the IECC's so-called "30% Solution," EC-14) and to oppose any weakening modifications.
- Before the ICC's Development Committee meets on February 18, urge mayors to show their public support for a 30% improvement in energy efficiency codes for buildings and homes and their opposition to any steps backward. Possible avenues include calls, a mayor's sign-on letter, municipal resolutions and letters to

IECC Development Committee members, speeches and other public communications.

- **Encourage mayors attending the January 23-24 US Conference of Mayors meeting in Washington to take a giant leap toward enhancing energy security and reducing wasted energy and greenhouse gas emissions by supporting “The 30% Solution” submitted by the Energy Efficient Codes Coalition (EECC).**

Mayors are not only a natural to champion this issue but, in addition, have significant reasons to ensure the adoption of “The 30% Solution”:

- 1) **Strengthening building codes is vital to the success of efforts to improve America’s energy efficiency. Global warming and energy security are two of the greatest challenges of our time. Building energy codes are mayors’ most powerful tool in rising to and meeting these challenges.**
- 2) **Acting now is timely. The ICC Development Committee meeting in February is a critical decision point. With mayoral leadership, the committee will submit a strong code package to the full ICC. The full ICC — made up of the nation’s code officials — will meet in Minneapolis in September to take final action on the code.**

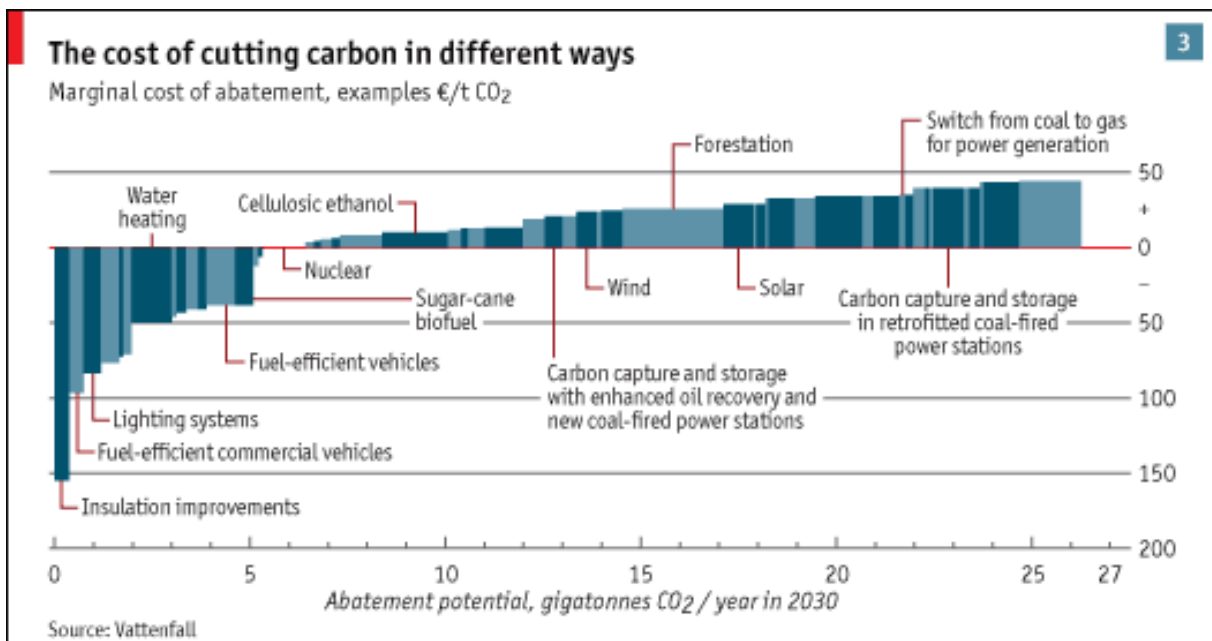
A growing number of America’s mayors — including Michael Bloomberg of New York, Richard Daley of Chicago, Greg Nickels of Seattle and Will Wynn of Austin — are now focused on the fight against climate change. Every day the media reports on a new aspect of this fight. Your leadership in highlighting the critical importance of building efficiency and energy codes will draw national attention and place you among the vanguard of mayors.

- 3) **Action is urgent. As of today, 754 mayors have signed the U.S. Conference of Mayors’ Climate Protection Agreement, pledging to reduce their cities’ greenhouse gas emissions to 7 percent below 1990 levels by 2012.**

Mayors can't hope to meet this ambitious pledge *without* improving energy efficiency in homes and buildings, which account for over 40% of America's total energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions and around ¾ of its electricity.

Because new buildings last for decades, making improvements to energy efficiency *today* is a critical element to meeting future environmental and energy-saving goals.

- 4) **A 30% Solution is an achievable and cost effective first step.** In its May 31st 2007 issue, *The Economist* wrote "SOME ways of cutting carbon are cheaper than others. So, at different carbon prices, different sorts of methods of abatement become worthwhile. Vattenfall, a Swedish power utility, has tried to quantify which ones would be worth undertaking at what price." The chart below shows how steps incorporated into more energy efficient building codes are among the most cost effective measures we can take to reduce carbon emissions:



Studies by McKinsey & Company have similarly concluded that constructing buildings to be more energy efficient is extremely cost-effective and long over due. The energy savings more than pay for themselves. See www.nytimes.com/2007/11/30/college/coll30green.html

The National Association of Homebuilders will argue that the higher initial investment in energy efficiency will make homes less affordable to lower income homebuyers. But isn't it better for home buyers (particularly lower income home buyers) to have greater certainty in their personal budgets by having energy efficiency incorporated into their mortgage payments from the beginning, rather than having to face unknown and potentially unaffordable energy price spikes later?

In addition, when a major nationwide home builder commissioned a survey that asked potential homebuyers: "If a builder could save you \$300 a year in future heating and cooling by adding an energy package would you spend the money?" a whopping 67% said they would spend \$1,200-\$1,500 more for their home and another 18% responded they would spend \$1,500-\$2,000! See www.natresnet.org/ratings/overview/resources/pulte.htm.

Across the nation, homebuilders) are already building homes that achieve a 30-45% improvement over existing energy efficiency codes at little or no extra cost. See www.nrel.gov/docs/fy00osti/28322.pdf.

- 5) Investments in energy efficiency not only generate returns to homeowners and building owners in the form of reduced energy costs, but also help our nation reach societal goals (i.e., reducing America's dependence on foreign energy, easing pressure to build power plants and transmission lines, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, etc.).**

Mayors argue that strengthening building codes can also end up creating good "green collar" jobs locally as money that would have been spent on electricity or used for new power plant construction is available for other investments and job growth at all skill levels. See www.usmayors.org/uscm/us_mayor_newspaper/documents/11_19_07/pg5_green_jobs.asp

- 6) **A broad consensus is forming to take the first giant step by strengthening the 2009 energy building codes for homes and buildings by at least 30%.**
- a. A coalition of energy efficiency supporters from government, business and environmental groups has submitted what they call “The 30% Solution” to the ICC.
 - b. High-ranking officials of the US Dept of Energy have public affirmed the department’s support for a 30% improvement in building codes.
 - c. The US Conference of Mayors, American Institute of Architects, US Green Building Council and the American Society of Heating Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) have endorsed the 2030 Challenge, which calls for immediately strengthening building energy codes by more than 30% with the goal of requiring zero energy buildings by 2030. See www.architecture2030.org/2030_challenge/onboard.html
- 7) **Mayoral leadership may be the tipping point in stressing the vital national importance of the ICC taking the bold steps to improve America’s building energy efficiency.**
- a. Not surprisingly, code writers have traditionally given greater attention to fire and safety codes than to energy codes.
 - b. But the time has come for the ICC to elevate the importance of energy codes to the prominence our nation’s energy crisis demands.
 - c. While the National Association of Homebuilders will argue that “The 30% Solution” is controversial, the growing national consensus for greater energy efficiency proves that the only “controversy” is their continued resistance. Bold steps are crucial and long overdue.