

It's Time to Set America on a Path to an Efficient, Net Zero Future

Challenge

Establishing stronger building energy codes is an essential strategy for long-term building efficiency, affordability, and resiliency to extreme temperatures. Energy codes are a subset of building codes that set minimum requirements for energy efficiency for newly constructed or renovated buildings; they govern elements such as the level of insulation required in the walls or the lighting power allowed per square foot of floor space, reducing the energy required to run these buildings and increasing their resistance to changes in the exterior environment.

Starting in 2006, energy codes across the U.S. have raised the bar for building energy performance—saving businesses, communities, and individuals money while reducing greenhouse gas pollution. The importance of strong energy codes will only grow as climate change increases the rate of severe weather events and the cost of energy. However, continued resistance to adopting stronger codes as well as the recent change in how future energy codes are developed put these gains at risk.

Opportunity

Each year, the U.S. builds more than 1 million new homes, and between 2020 and 2060, the global building stock is expected to add approximately 2.6 trillion square feet.

These homes, offices, schools, community centers, and other spaces are more than just structures where people work, learn, live, and interact. Our nation's buildings also need to be designed, constructed, and maintained to support human health, prosperity, and climate resilience.

Continuous improvement in building code design and adoption is the key to reducing harmful greenhouse gas emissions, reducing energy bills for households and businesses, and decreasing America's reliance on fossil fuels. Building efficiency also increases passive survivability in the case of power outages often associated with record-breaking heat and severe weather.

With an expected design life of more than 50 years for most commercial and residential buildings, the energy choices we make now are crucial for a sustainable future. What's needed is a strong coalition to advocate for continued improvements in building energy codes.

Our program

The Energy-Efficient Codes Coalition (EECC) is dedicated to advancing building energy codes across the United States to ensure that all new construction is safe, healthy, efficient, and resilient. EECC specializes in bringing together building sector advocates and supporters to drive three major outcomes:

- 1) Continuous improvement in the energy efficiency of the International Energy Conservation Code (IECC), working towards the goal of net-zero new construction.
- 2) Adoption of the latest version of the codes, achieved by equipping state and local governments and their communities with the necessary resources to advocate for and implement stronger building energy codes.
- 3) Up-to-date reference standards for federal agencies who oversee and support the design, construction, and/or financing of new homes and buildings.

EECC's strength lies in connecting disparate groups—businesses, trade associations, energy efficiency and environmental organizations, and consumer advocates—with a shared goal to drive collective advocacy and action.

Over the past 15 years, the EECC's coordinated and highly responsive network has help boost the residential and commercial efficiency of the IECC by 45% and 39%, respectively. Recent improvements were hard fought, however, and opponents of efficiency gains have taken notice, as evidenced by changes to the IECC development cycle. Stretch codes (more stringent locally mandated energy codes or alternative compliance paths) have been adopted by only a handful of jurisdictions, further heightening the need to strengthen model codes if want to see widespread change.

Given unprecedented federal funding opportunities tied to the 2021 IECC, now is the time for governments to adopt the 2021 IECC, locking in the increased stringency that resulted from our 2019 campaign. In support of this goal, the EECC offers ready-made resources to support state and local adoption, including a comprehensive "Adoption Toolkit" featuring technical and cost justifications that can bolster the environmental and economic case for upgrading to the 2021 IECC.

We must act NOW to build a better future

Learn more about how to get involved with the coalition by visiting www.energyefficientcodes.org or contact Executive Director Amy Boyce (amy@energyefficientcodes.org).