

ENERGY CODES:

What Advocates Need to Know

KNOW
YOUR
ENERGY
RIGHTS

We don't often think about how much energy used in buildings impacts society. Yet buildings account for over 40 percent of total energy use in the United States—more than either the transportation or industrial sectors.

Energy Codes are minimum requirements for efficient design and construction for new and renovated residential and commercial buildings. They form part of the overall building code that is adopted by state and local governments.

BUILDING ENERGY CODES ARE IMPORTANT BECAUSE THEY:

REDUCE ENERGY CONSUMPTION AND GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Most buildings waste energy needlessly, which is a serious problem, because over one-third of total US greenhouse gas emissions come from the building sector. Adopting and enforcing energy codes will reduce building energy consumption, and help mitigate the impacts of climate change. In addition, it will...

SAVE CONSUMERS MONEY

In 2008, US households spent about \$2,225 on energy bills, while the commercial sector spent an estimated \$183 billion on non-renewable energy expenditures. Energy efficient buildings reduce utility bills and put money back into consumers' and companies' pockets. Millions of additional dollars could then be used to...



ENERGY CODES: cont.

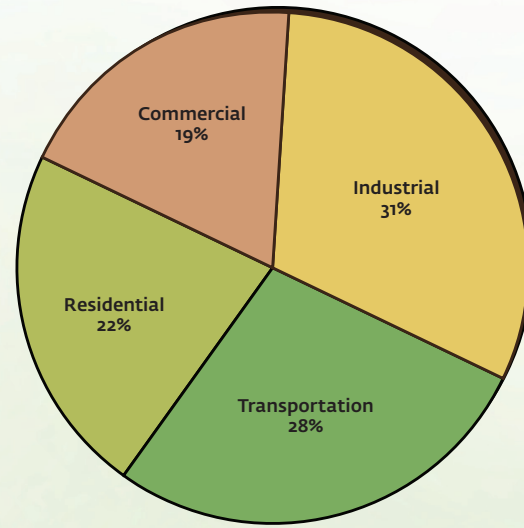
HELP STIMULATE THE ECONOMY AND CREATE GREEN JOBS

Consumers can bolster the local economy with money saved from reduced energy bills. Businesses can transfer savings to production and investment. Effective compliance and enforcement programs also require a significant investment of time, resources, and labor power, while the market for energy audits, retrofits, and weatherization continues to grow. In short, investing in energy efficiency creates green jobs. Of course, the primary function of building codes is to...

ENSURE HEALTH AND SAFETY

While traditional life/health/safety concerns occupy the bulk of builders' and code officials' work—and rightly so—building energy efficiency deserves equal standing. First, it reduces heating and cooling costs, which helps protect millions of low-income Americans who can now afford to stay warm in the winter and cool in the summer. Second, it improves indoor air quality, which keeps us healthier. These benefits also help...

SHARE OF ENERGY CONSUMED BY MAJOR SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY



Source: Energy Information Administration, *Annual Energy Review 2008*.



Air leakage is often responsible for 30% or more of home energy loss. To meet national Energy Code standards, builders must seal joints, seams and penetrations inside and outside the home.



ENERGY CODES: cont.



To meet national energy code standards, builders must insulate crawl space walls and the floor above.



IMPROVE LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY

Buildings leave a mark. They use over one-third of our energy, two-thirds of our electricity, and one-eighth of our water. As we continue to raise the worldwide standard of living, we must account for the environmental impacts of our global society. Energy efficiency—including the adoption and enforcement of strong building energy codes—is the quickest, cheapest and cleanest way to reduce energy consumption and achieve a sustainable and prosperous future.

YOU CAN HELP PROMOTE STRONG BUILDING ENERGY CODES !

- Educate the public about their stake in strong Building Energy Codes and energy efficiency.
- Ask state and local governments to expand information for consumers about Energy Codes, through annual workshops and/or posting of Energy Code information on public websites.
- Distribute our Home Energy Code Guide and Checklist to help consumers verify whether their home meets the national Energy Code.
- Encourage policymakers to adopt strong Building Energy Codes in states and local communities, and at the national level.
- Advocate for increased resources for builder education and energy code enforcement at the state and local level.

For more information, visit:

www.bcap-ocean.org or
www.greenerchoices.org/energycodes



Building Codes Assistance Project

www.bcap-ocean.org



Consumer Reports

www.GreenerChoices.org
www.ConsumerReports.org