

DRAFT

Understanding the Importance of the Energy Codes on the Direct Use of Natural Gas.

INTRODUCTION

In the United States, model energy codes are developed through voluntary processes that result in the publication of new editions on usually a 3-year cycle. There is no federal energy code for residential homes and commercial buildings. The primary model energy code developers in the country are the International Code Counsel (ICC) for residential homes and commercial buildings and the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) 90.1 standard that is a commercial building model energy code. Once updated, the energy codes are then reviewed by states and jurisdictions, and through a regulatory or legislative process become a requirement for the construction of homes and buildings in that state or jurisdiction. The importance of the energy codes for the natural gas industry lies in the requirements that can impact the energy source to be used, i.e., natural gas, electric, oil, etc. Below is a summary of the importance of energy codes, their impact on the direct use of natural gas and ways to become involved to help avoid requirements that limit or prohibit the direct use of natural gas in the built environment.

How Can I find what energy code is adopted in a state?

The state adoption site of the ICC's International Energy Conservation Code including what editions have been adopted can be accessed [here](#) . Simply clicking on the state provides the ICC energy code adopted and permits online access of the chosen energy code for review.

The Energy Code Adoption Process Varies by State.

Energy code adoption varies by state and can be by legislative action, by a state regulatory agency or perhaps a combination of the two. It is important to know how the state of interest processes energy code adoptions including how to be involved, the timetable and most important on how to comment and provide input into the process. It's important also to know that in the state adoption process, most states permit amendments to the model energy code under consideration can be submitted and may be approved. A useful source for more information on state adoption processes is in publications from the National Association of State Energy Officials (NASEO) that can be accessed [here](#).

Department of Energy's Role in Energy Code Development

Federal legislation has identified a role for the Department of Energy the development and support energy codes. While the United States does not have a national Energy code, the DOE is tasked with providing several ways in support and in evaluating the model energy codes developed by the ICC and ASHRAE. It is important to be cognizant of the DOE role since it does

impact how provisions in the model energy codes are evaluated for energy savings and cost effectiveness. Detailed information on the DOE role can be found [here](#).

Efforts Underway to Add Amendments to State Energy Code Adoptions that Promote Electrification.

An emerging approach has surfaced in state energy code adoption processing that has been observed is that advocates for “electrification” have been promoting to states considering the adoption of the 2021 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) that would add amendments to add provisions that failed to be adopted in the 2021 IECC such as requiring electric ready requirements for single-family homes to position owners to use electric heating, cooking and electric vehicle (EV) charging options whenever they choose to adopt those technologies. This effort would basically ignore and overturn the ICC governmental consensus development process that the IECC went through to develop the 2021 IECC and needs to be challenged wherever it is promoted based on the rationale that these amendments cannot be verified to produce energy consumption reductions and they would be costly to comply. The natural gas industry, particularly at the state level must be vigilant that these types of pro “electrification” provisions do not become amended to state energy codes.

What Next? Get involved and Here’s How!

Energy codes can and do have an impact on energy choices for homes and businesses. The first step is to recognize that energy codes are an important area that needs to be paid attention to and understood for the potential negative implications they can have on applications of the direct use of natural gas in homes and businesses. Become familiar with the energy codes and specifically the development process used to generate them as well as the adoption process used by states and jurisdictions to make them a requirement for builders and architects. Work with partners and other stakeholders to participate in the energy code development process by submitting comments and if possible, presenting testimony at energy code hearings to make your voice heard. There is a wealth of resources that can help in formulating positions and rationale on energy code provisions that are fact based and persuasive. Those resources for the natural gas industry include the AGA Building Energy Codes and Standards (BECS) Committee, state or local natural gas committees, manufacturers associations, etc. Today’s natural gas industry is under the most serious attacks ever that are targeting the banning of natural gas in a variety of ways including the use of adding provisions in the energy codes is one way that anti fossil fuel proponents use to discourage or prohibit the direct use of natural gas in homes and businesses. For more detailed information on energy codes and getting involved, contact Jim Ranfone @ jranfone@aga.org.

10.20.2021

