

SUPPORT BILL TO IMPROVE ENERGY EFFICIENCY FOR NEW HOME CONSTRUCTION

THE ENERGY EFFICIENCY STANDARDS FOR RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION IN VIRGINIA'S BUILDING CODE LAG MANY YEARS BEHIND NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED STANDARDS

Support Senator Boysko's Bill

LOWER UTILITY BILLS

Energy efficient construction reduces energy utility bills. If Virginia had fully adopted the 2012 national standards (International Energy Conservation Code, IECC), new homeowners would (1) save \$5,836 in utility costs over 30 years and (2) achieve net savings from the first month of occupancy even after accounting for an increase in mortgage costs ([U.S. DOE Report](#))

Energy efficiency retrofits cost far more than installing efficiency measures during construction.

The Virginia Clean Economy Act (VCEA) and the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) require the Commonwealth and its utilities to spend over \$1 billion by 2028 to improve energy efficiency in low-income communities, even as the building code allows builders to construct housing that fails to meet nationally recognized energy efficiency standards.

REDUCE ENERGY DEMAND, EMISSIONS & ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE

Buildings consume 70% of electricity and 40% of overall energy used nationally. Air pollution from energy production harms health & contributes to climate change with its devastating economic impacts. Energy efficient buildings will reduce emissions, improve public health & help meet climate goals of the VCEA and RGGI.

EXISTING CODE

The VA Code (section 36.99) requires the Board of Housing & Community Development (BHCD) to enact building code provisions that shall "*protect the health, safety, and welfare of the residents of the Commonwealth... consistent with recognized standards of health, safety, energy conservation and water conservation.*"

While BHCD has long recognized the IECC as its source of standards, it has carved out significant exceptions to benefit home builders, not residents. The Virginia code for wall insulation & air leakage is from the 2009 IECC and will remain so until at least 2024 unless the BHCD is compelled to protect residents consistent with the IECC.



Legislation is needed now to assure timely adoption and implementation of nationally recognized energy efficiency standards for residential construction. Failing to act would (1) undermine the public's welfare and the Governor's and Legislature's policies to reduce carbon emissions and (2) continue to burden residents, including low-income families, with high energy costs.

For more information, contact Bill Penniman, bill.penniman@gmail.com
or Connor Kish, connor.kish@sierraclub.org