

Why Energy Codes Matter

What Policymakers Need to Know

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.

Building energy codes matter because they:

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 use less energy, which **reduces utility bills and puts money back into consumers' and companies' pockets**. Millions of additional dollars are now available to...

Help Stimulate the Economy and Create Green Jobs

Consumers spend **money saved from reduced energy bills** on other goods and services, which bolsters the local economy. Businesses can transfer savings to other areas of need, such as **production, investment, and employee retention**. Moreover, energy code compliance and enforcement require significant investments of time and resources from building departments, state energy offices, and the building industry. Setting new standards for efficiency also expands the growing market for energy audits, retrofits, and weatherization. In short, investing in energy efficiency projects **creates a wide-range of new green jobs**. States and municipalities that take initiative in adopting energy codes may also be eligible for additional federal funds. Of course, at their most basic level, building codes are designed to...

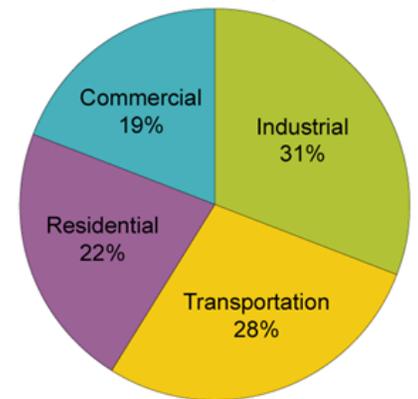
Ensure Health and Safety

While traditional life/health/safety concerns occupy the bulk of code officials' and builders' work—and rightly so—building energy efficiency deserves equal standing. First, it **reduces heating and cooling costs**, which helps protect millions of working Americans who can now afford to stay warm in the winter and cool in the summer. Second, it **reduces pollution** from electricity generation and **improves indoor air quality**, both of which keep us healthier. Finally, it **reduces greenhouse gas emissions**, which mitigates the impacts of global climate change. These benefits also help...

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—through 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.

Share of Energy Consumed by Major Sectors of the Economy, 2008



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

OCEAN is an online resource of the Building Codes Assistance Project

For more information, please visit us at: www.bcap-ocean.org



A joint initiative of the Alliance to Save Energy (ASE), the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), and the American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy (ACEEE)

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