



July 27, 2020

Construction Industries Commission  
New Mexico Construction Industries Division  
P.O. Box 25101  
Santa Fe, NM 87594

[via email]

Dear Members of the Construction Industries Commission,

On behalf of the Natural Resources Defense Council and our more than 2 million members and activists, including nearly 5,000 New Mexico residents, we write in strong support of New Mexico's proposed adoption of the 2018 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) for residential and commercial buildings.

The IECC is developed through a public, consensus-based process administered by the International Code Council. The code receives input from local government officials, efficiency advocates, architects, builders, product manufacturers, and other building experts. The result is a model energy code, which is then adopted at the state or local level. New buildings constructed in New Mexico currently must comply with the 2009 IECC, which is vastly outdated at the expense of New Mexican households and business who can't afford to waste money on energy. The model energy code has subsequently been updated in 2012, 2015, and 2018, and the process to update to the 2021 IECC will be concluded later this fall. Eight other states, including Texas, Florida, and Delaware have already updated to the 2018 IECC.

Adopting the 2018 IECC will result in new homes and commercial buildings that are more energy efficient, cost less to operate, and cause less carbon pollution. A 2016 study by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) looked specifically at the cost effectiveness of moving from the 2009 IECC to the

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2015 IECC for new residential construction in New Mexico. The study found an immediately positive consumer cash flow of nearly \$300, meaning that new home buyers will save money from the very first year they live in the home, even accounting for any increased construction costs. The energy efficiency improvements save almost 22% in energy costs as compared to the 2009 IECC, pay for themselves entirely within the first 4.4 years, and save homeowners more than \$5,000 in utility costs in the first 30 years a home is occupied.<sup>1</sup> While this exact analysis has not been done for the 2018 IECC, DOE has determined that the 2018 IECC will save an additional 2 percent in energy costs nationwide beyond the 2015 IECC, with a simple payback period of under 2 years.<sup>2</sup>

The commercial code has made even more significant improvements since the 2009 update, meaning even greater savings. The IECC incorporates the ASHRAE Standard 90.1. New Mexico's commercial buildings must currently comply with a code that is approximately equivalent to ASHRAE Standard 90.1-2007. The ASHRAE standard has since been updated in 2010, 2013, and 2016. ASHRAE Standard 90.1-2016 is incorporated as a compliance pathway into the 2018 IECC, meaning builders can comply by following either the IECC requirements or ASHRAE requirements. DOE analysis of the versions of ASHRAE 90.1 released since 2007 shows an incredible improvement in energy cost savings: moving from the 90.1-2007 to 90.1-2010 will save more than 23 percent in energy costs,<sup>3</sup> moving to 90.1-2013 will save an additional 8.7 percent in energy costs,<sup>4</sup> and moving to 90.1-2016 will save another 8.2 percent. Failing to update the New Mexico code to the 2018 IECC simply wastes money for homeowners and business

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[https://www.energycodes.gov/sites/default/files/documents/NewMexicoResidentialCostEffectiveness\\_2015.pdf](https://www.energycodes.gov/sites/default/files/documents/NewMexicoResidentialCostEffectiveness_2015.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.energycodes.gov/development/determinations>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.energycodes.gov/sites/default/files/documents/PNNL-22972.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.energycodes.gov/sites/default/files/documents/901-2013\\_finalCommercialDeterminationQuantitativeAnalysis\\_TSD.pdf](https://www.energycodes.gov/sites/default/files/documents/901-2013_finalCommercialDeterminationQuantitativeAnalysis_TSD.pdf)

owners at a time when every dollar spent on utility costs could be better spent elsewhere.

Furthermore, making new buildings more efficient will help New Mexico achieve state policy objectives, particularly the goals outlined in its Energy Transition Act. That law requires the state to obtain 50 percent of its energy from renewable sources by 2030 and 100 percent carbon free electricity generation by 2045. More efficient buildings use less energy, which means it will be easier and cheaper for the state to meet its energy demand using renewable and carbon free sources. Conversely, failing to upgrade the building code means that any newly constructed buildings will unnecessarily waste energy for years to come, leading to higher utility bills for inhabitants and higher energy costs across the state.

We thank you for considering these comments and we urge you to adopt the 2018 IECC without weakening amendments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lauren Urbanek". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lauren Urbanek  
Senior Energy Policy Advocate