



For Immediate Release

NEWS RELEASE

“30% Solution” Falls Short of Full Adoption by National Codes Organization in Minneapolis

*Code, Other Governmental Officials Substantially Improve Provisions of
International Energy Conservation Code,
But Fail to Meet Goal of 30 Percent Boost in Energy Efficiency*

MINNEAPOLIS, MN, September 23, 2008 – Energy efficiency will substantially improve in the nation’s 2009 model energy code governing new home construction – the International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) –, but will not achieve the 30 percent improvement sought by the U.S. Department of Energy, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, the National Association of State Energy Officials, many governors and the broad-based Energy Efficient Codes Coalition (EECC). But after two decades of only modest energy efficiency gains, it’s clear that a growing number of building officials are embracing the need for much higher energy efficiency in our codes for new home construction, the EECC noted.

“We’re deeply disappointed that ‘The 30% Solution’ – our comprehensive proposal to meet the 30 percent goal – fell just a few votes shy of the two-thirds needed for adoption,” said EECC Director William Fay. “But we are heartened that over 60 percent of those participating voted in favor of our package, and that a majority of code and other governmental officials consistently backed individual proposals representing an unprecedented increase in new home energy efficiency.

“We thank the dedicated people who sacrificed their weekend, staying well past midnight on Sunday night to support, testify for and cast their votes for a 30 percent boost in new home energy efficiency and then returned early Monday morning to continue the fight for individual improvements,” Fay said. “They showed their commitment to acting on America’s energy crisis and to giving future generations of American home buyers more efficient, more affordable homes.”

New Home Energy Efficiency Key to Sound National Energy Policy

William D. Fay • Code Coalition Director • bfay@ase.org

1850 M Street, NW • Suite 600 • Washington, DC 20036 • Phone: (202) 857-0666 • www.thirtypercentsolution.org

“Buildings are the last great frontier of wasted energy,” Fay added, noting that America’s homes and commercial buildings are the nation’s leading energy users and the leading source of greenhouse gas emissions. He continued, “Because these buildings last for generations and are expensive to retrofit, any successful national energy policy must include robust improvements in energy efficiency for new homes and commercial buildings. That’s where the IECC comes in. If fully implemented, it will make sure homes are built to be energy efficient in the first place.”

Fierce Opposition: “Too Costly, Too Soon”

The principal opponents argued that now isn’t the time to adopt “The 30% Solution,” which they said is too costly to homeowners, technologically unachievable and burdensome to code officials.

But, as one homebuilder pointed out, green homebuilders, prove every day that 30 percent is a modest target, and that many builders around the nation are achieving efficiency improvements well beyond 30 percent. As to the cost of energy efficiency to homeowners, low income housing advocates testified that inability to pay utility bills is the second leading cause of foreclosures and evictions, which are currently at record highs. Finally, a study by U.S. DOE’s National Renewable Energy Laboratory found that a 30 percent more energy-efficient home returns \$511 a year in energy savings to homeowners *after consideration of the cost of improvements*.

“It’s ironic that the very day opponents called ‘The 30% Solution’ too costly, oil prices jumped \$25 a barrel,” Fay said. “For those who say ‘Not now,’ we ask ‘When?’”

The Benefits of ICC Actions

The 2009 IECC will have several significant new provisions to boost energy efficiency, including:

- Increased insulation in basements, floors and walls;
- Improved window efficiency;
- Reductions in wasted energy from leaky heating & cooling ducts;
- Reductions in tradeoffs that fail to capture energy savings from efficient heating & cooling equipment;
- High-efficiency lighting; and
- Improved air sealing within the building envelope.

As a result of these new requirements, homeowners will enjoy a more comfortable living environment, as well as reduced energy costs. Utilities should benefit as well, because the effects of improved energy efficiency reduce demand for electricity, natural gas and heating oil could stabilize prices and delay the need for new power plant construction. Energy-intensive businesses will also benefit as reduced demand eases upward pressure on energy prices.

What's Next

"We view this glass as half full, although our energy crisis may mean we should have a bucket instead of a glass," Fay added. "One thing is certain: the EECC is in this battle for the long haul."

The group will continue to work for progressive codes that will eventually take new home construction well beyond a 30 percent improvement. In the near term, the coalition will make "The 30% Solution" available for states that want to go beyond the 2009 IECC today. "Most importantly," Fay said, "we'll work with states to ensure that local elected officials, code officials and builders have the resources they need to do their jobs, and we will continue to expand our coalition so that when the time comes for a new code cycle, we'll have even better proposals and, hopefully, an even broader consensus."

About EECC

The Energy Efficient Codes Coalition is a unique, broad-based alliance of longstanding energy efficiency advocates – from government, national energy efficiency groups, regional energy efficiency alliances, environmental groups, utilities, affordable housing advocates, architecture, academia/think tanks, energy consumers and businesses, and labor. Together, the coalition developed "The 30% Solution," a comprehensive code change proposal to boost energy efficiency in the 2009 model energy code by 30% over the current IECC, using fully achievable and affordable "state-of-the-shelf" technologies. The coalition also opposes proposals that either weaken energy efficiency or include industry- or product-specific special exemptions. For more information, please see www.thirtypercentsolution.org

Media Contact: William Fay 202-530-2214