

## Environment Committee Meeting Invitation

### Meeting Details

**Topic:** State stretch codes

**Date:** Tuesday, Jan. 17<sup>th</sup>

**Time:** 10-11:30 a.m.

**Register:** Please register in advance for the Zoom meeting.

For more information: Please refer to the [recording](#), [slides](#), and [handout on stretch codes](#) from our March 2021 meeting on building energy policies and municipal opportunities in Illinois.

The Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA) of 2021 required that Illinois develop its first-ever stretch energy codes. A stretch code is a code that is more aggressive than the base code (or “stretches” beyond the base code in its efficiency measures), which results in buildings that achieve higher energy savings. Stretch codes will provide a path for local governments to attain zero-energy-ready new construction by 2031, and the first iteration will be available for communities to adopt in January 2024. To ensure the new code options will meet CEJA’s requirements and align with the best available building science and state of practice, New Buildings Institute (NBI) and RMI have supported the Illinois Energy Code Advisory Council in developing its recommendations for the Capital Development Board.

You are invited to provide input into the development of the new stretch code.

Public comment on the stretch codes will be open in January through early February. NBI and RMI staff will provide an overview of stretch codes, what is under consideration for Illinois stretch codes, and how localities can voice their goals and needs in the stretch code development process.

### Background

Energy codes are a critical tool that help municipalities reduce energy use and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and pave the way for other types of energy policies and renewable energy investments. The National Renewable Energy Lab (NREL) [identified building energy codes as the most impactful policy action cities can take](#) to meet Paris Accord GHG reduction targets.

The Caucus and its member municipalities first became involved in improving the energy efficiency of building codes in 2019, when [advocating for a stronger 2021 International Energy Conservation Code \(IECC\)](#). Across the nation, governmental members of the International Codes Council (ICC) voted in record numbers for proposals that would give the 2021 IECC the highest boost in efficiency in a decade.

Although it seemed like the Caucus’ and municipalities’ efforts were successful, there were several setbacks they faced in subsequent years. In March of 2021, the ICC voted to eliminate governmental member voting on the IECC. The ICC, the organization that develops model codes, instead decided that the final determination of IECC provisions would come from a standards process with committees. The ICC made its decision, despite hearing [opposition from more than 2,000 local governments](#) during the public comment period.

Then during the amendment process for the 2021 IECC last year, several amendments were proposed in Illinois that would weaken the state’s IECC, in some cases rolling back energy efficiency by as much as 20%. The [Illinois Energy Code Advisory Council](#) voted to approve many of these weakening amendments. During a public comment period in the summer of 2022, the Caucus and member municipalities signed on to a letter that opposed the weakening amendments that were added to the 2021 IECC. The letter

pointed out how the less efficient code goes against CEJA's intent and would also prevent Illinois from accessing \$1 billion in funding from the Inflation Reduction Act, which can only go to states that meet or exceed the 2021 IECC.

In a surprising turn of events, the Capital Development Board released a [statement](#) on Dec. 5, 2022, which said that any amendments that were weaker than the 2021 IECC would be removed from the state's proposed code to better align the document with Gov. Pritzker's climate change initiatives and statewide energy conservation goals.

Overall, the municipal voice has not always been heard during energy code discussions, even though local governments are responsible for understanding and enforcing the code. Your voice is needed to guide the development of the state stretch codes during the public comment period. This Environment Committee meeting offers a special opportunity to learn and offer input.

[GRC](#) goals and advanced strategy: Enact policies that support clean energy. Reduce energy consumption. Adopt stretch codes, which set higher standards for energy efficiency than the International Energy Conservation Code (IECC).

[Climate Action Plan](#) objective and strategy: Implement clean energy policies. Support robust building energy conservation codes.