

Background

The Milwaukee City-County Task Force on Climate and Economic Equity understands that local governments cannot meet their greenhouse gas reduction targets without better codes governing energy in our residential and commercial buildings. Currently, the energy code for buildings is established by the State of Wisconsin, and local governments do not currently have the flexibility to mandate a higher energy conservation code on all building projects within their jurisdiction. Further, Wisconsin's adopted code lags far behind what is recommended by the International Energy Conservation Code (2021 IECC). A map of energy code adoption by State can be viewed [here](#). Wisconsin currently follows a watered-down version of the 2015 IECC Code for commercial buildings, which effectively operates at the 2009 IECC code level. Wisconsin's Commercial Building Energy Code (SPS 363) is based on the 2015 model energy conservation code, but with a series of amendments so that the code is effectively very similar to the 2009 code.

The [Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services](#) (DSPS) has convened the [Commercial Building Code Council](#) and is reviewing the 2021 International Building Code, including the energy chapter, for potential adoption, with the energy chapter under review in summer 2021. For more information, [visit Wisconsin's Commercial Building Code Council's website](#).

Recommendations

The Milwaukee City-County Task Force on Climate and Economic Equity **supports the building code recommendations outlined in Section 12 of the [Governor's Task Force on Climate Change Report](#) (December 2020).**

In particular, WLGCC Supports:

- Adoption of the latest model energy code (i.e., 2021 IECC) without weakening amendments
 - For every model code update, the U.S. Department of Energy provides state-specific data illustrating that building owners, occupants and the State of Wisconsin would benefit from the adoption of the IECC without weakening amendments.
 - <https://www.energycodes.gov/adoption/state-code-adoption-tracking-analysis>
 - https://www.energycodes.gov/development/commercial/cost_effectiveness
- Update the energy code on a regular 3-year cycle instead of every 6 years.
- Allow local jurisdictions to adopt a stretch energy conservation code stronger than the state code, or the State adopting a more stringent code than the 2021 IECC that is suitable for Wisconsin's climate.
- Responsible incorporation of electrical vehicle charging readiness requirements in the code.

Additionally, the Milwaukee Task Force recommends that the Wisconsin's Building Code Council add a stronger voice for energy conservation in its deliberations. In particular the Task Force supports all or a combination of the following:

1. Appointing new Commercial Building Code Council member(s) to provide leadership and technical support within the Wisconsin Commercial Building Code to move forward with the adoption of latest building energy conservation standards (such as ASHRAE 90.1 and IECC) This person ideally should meet the following professional criteria:
 - Be familiar with ASHRAE 90.1 Standard or IECC code or equivalent, or
 - Be an advocate for energy conservation
 - Provide advice related to changing building energy codes taking into account thermal comfort, indoor air quality and economic impact.
 - Be familiar with the Wisconsin Building Energy Code.
 - Have notable expertise with Energy Efficiency practices (i.e., building envelope science, energy modelling, commissioning, etc.)
2. DSPS hiring a consultant that would be engaged extensively in advising the Code Council throughout the code review to ensure alignment with the Governor's Task Force on Climate Change Report recommendations.
3. DSPS forming a separate energy conservation code committee, comprised of efficiency/conservation engineers and technical experts, to make recommendations specifically on the energy use portion of the building codes,