



March 18, 2022

Delivered by email - stretchcode@mass.gov

The Department of Energy Resources
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 1020
Boston, MA 02114
Attn: Nina Mascarenhas

Re: Stretch Code Straw Proposal Comments

Dear Ms. Mascarenhas:

We are submitting this letter and attached report to provide a snapshot of the state of the Net Zero building industry in MA today. Based on our findings we believe that the industry will be able to meet and even exceed the requirements proposed in the energy code straw proposals for an updated stretch code and new, municipal opt-in stretch code.

Continued data collection from the Massachusetts building community shows the total known square footage of Net Zero and Net Zero Ready projects in the Commonwealth has reached 16.5 million GSF, an increase of 130% in just one year. As well, the number of architects, engineers, contractors, owners, and consultants working on these net zero projects has grown substantially in the past year, with a 135% increase to 313 companies working to make net zero buildings the standard in MA.

Highlights from the updated report include:

- The Net Zero and Net Zero Ready building stock **exceeds 16.5 million square feet and is growing at an exponential rate in the Commonwealth today.**
- Of the 4 million GSF with reported cost data, **85% reported <1% construction cost premium** to achieve Net Zero Ready.
- **Affordable housing, Multifamily housing, K-12 Schools, and Labs & Tech** are leading the way, employing heat pumps and on-site renewables to reach their net zero targets.
- **Affordable Housing makes up 78%** of all residential Net Zero and Net Zero Ready square footage, up from 54% in March 2021.
- Net Zero Ready buildings are highly energy efficient: **90% are at least 35% more efficient than the current stretch code baseline** (up from 82% in March, 2021 with 26% more projects reporting energy data). All rely on heat pumps as the primary source



of heat. Net Zero buildings also procure on-site and/or off-site renewable energy to offset 100% of consumption on a net annual basis.

In only a short period of time, our research has shown that there is exponential growth in adoption by practitioners and market adoption of Net Zero buildings in the Commonwealth across all building types. We support the continued push to more energy efficient buildings the stretch code provides and the focus on building envelope design while maintaining flexibility in how those outcomes are achieved.

We'd be happy to answer any questions you may have regarding our data.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Meredith Elbaum".

Meredith Elbaum, AIA, LEED AP
Executive Director
Built Environment Plus

About Built Environment Plus

Built Environment Plus (BE+) drives sustainable and regenerative design, construction, and operation of the built environment. They are a member-based non-profit providing green building education, networking, advocacy and leadership opportunities for the Massachusetts sustainable building community. They envision that the built environment will regenerate and sustain the health and vitality of all life within a generation. Their programs are supported and enhanced by the volunteer efforts of our members, the leaders and aspiring leaders of the green building community.

BE+ is a U.S. Green Building Council Community, and is home to the ILFI New England Living Future Collaborative and the Emerging Professionals of Massachusetts.