

Finlayson, Ian (ENE)

From: Amy Gortler <algortler@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, 21 March 2022 4:46 PM
To: STRETCHCODE (ENE)
Subject: Stretch Code Straw Proposal Comments

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Department of Energy Resources (DOER)
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 1020
Boston, MA 02114
Attention: Nina Mascarenhas

Dear Commissioner Woodcock, Director McCarey, Mssrs. Finlayson and Ormond, et al:

Having attended the March 3, 2022 DOER public hearing, we first want to thank all the public representatives who spoke whether it was Senator Barrett or state representatives or those representing municipalities. We not only agree with the comments made by these officials but share their disappointment at DOER's timid and underwhelming proposal. They demonstrated their knowledge, passion, and understanding of the urgency of the matter before us. Here in Waltham, we are experiencing a high level of development of new business facilities. In the residential sector, we see either large renovations of existing properties or the demolition of single family homes to be replaced by multi-family units. A strong Stretch Code Update—one that upholds the goals of the 2021 Act Creating a Roadmap to Net-Zero by 2050— would give us the tools we need to start “decarbonizing” our buildings. Unfortunately, the recently-released Straw Proposal for the Stretch Code Update and the New Specialized Stretch Code falls far short of what is needed and does not uphold the intent of the Legislature. The 2021 climate bill required the administration to draft a "municipal opt-in specialized stretch energy code" for newly constructed buildings that includes "net-zero building performance standards and a definition of net-zero building." The Straw Proposal provides no definition of net zero or even focus around how net zero can be achieved.

In addition, we applaud the efforts of cities like Brookline and Lexington who have filed home rule petitions because of state laws preventing them from establishing higher standards. The simple fact is we need to innovate as quickly as possible and for those communities that want to be in the forefront they should have an all-electric option. Affluent municipalities have an advantage of citizens with the skills and volunteer time to assist the municipalities. By allowing some communities to go first, we increase the chances of finding innovations that are effective before a large state rollout. Then we can employ economies of scale to make them more affordable for environmental justice communities. This would enable the state to create programs based on data from the first wave of municipal electrification pilots. DOER would have the data necessary to commit public funds to help those communities who lack the technical expertise or financial ability to assist their citizens in transitioning to new technologies.

We are in a race against a climate tipping point. On behalf of Waltham, we ask you to allow innovations and develop a Stretch Code that encourages the decarbonization of our buildings. Moving away from fossil fuels is imperative for a climate resilient future.

Sincerely,
Melissa Downes & Amy Gortler, Co-Coordinator
Mothers Out Front, Waltham