

## Finlayson, Ian (ENE)

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**From:** Sarah Griscom <sbgriscom@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 10 August 2022 12:47 PM  
**To:** STRETCHCODE (ENE)  
**Subject:** BUILDING CODE COMMENTS

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Letter in Support of DOER Code:

This letter supports the code language and rejects the campaign initiated by the Massachusetts Climate Action Network to require that the Specialized Code be changed to require that ALL future construction be all-electric. I am a member of Chatham CAN, and the Chatham Energy and Climate Action Committee, an oceanographer, and formerly was licensed as LEED Accredited Professional. I am committed to eliminating fossil fuels and a future net-zero building code, but do not support regulations that require all-electric construction, YET.

I recently installed solar panels and a heat pump unit in my home. While I am personally pleased with the new technology, there are things we still do not know about, most particularly how the pumps perform at extreme temperatures. When people claim that heat pumps are proven technology, they do so using performance values provided by manufacturers. What we need are substantial field studies of performance. I have learned that the MA, CT, and RI efficiency programs are undertaking a metering study that should give us a better idea of performance. My hope is that five years from now, there will have been enough research and training in the field to know how best to install and operate heat pumps (and other electrified home technologies). With solid research and field studies we should then decide if we make all-electric construction mandatory.

Furthermore, while we need to achieve a fossil-free future, it is not clear that we gain much in forcing all new homes and businesses to go all-electric now. The truth is that the given our current electric grid, the all-electric home will use a similar amount of natural gas though it is burned at the power station. Shifting the burden for peaking power supply from the home to the grid will stress out a grid that is not built for the added electrification. In the future, when we have converted our power grid to clean electricity, and we've built the necessary energy storage; homes built under the NET-Zero Ready optional code, will have all the wiring in place to make the conversion.

I believe that the new stretch code is significantly better than the current stretch code. It will require that new buildings achieve levels of efficiency well above current practice. Each town has the responsibility for passing the code at town meeting and then enforcing the code. In order to get the new Net-Zero-Ready codes passed, each town will need 67% of town meeting attendees to vote yes. It is also possible for towns to vote to reject the stretch code and revert back to the base code. That would be a disaster. In my town of Chatham, I think we have a good shot to get Net-Zero-ready approval. I do not think we have any chance of getting an all electric-only code passed.

Because the Specialized Code as it was written is passable, it will have the greatest effect on meeting our current and future climate goals. I applaud DOER for taking this aggressive action. The energy efficiency requirements of this code are an important step that is not worth risking by reaching too far too quickly for all-electric construction.

Sincerely,

Sarah B. Griscom, Ph.D.

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