



**Comments on 9th Edition of the MA State Building Code ("780 CMR")  
Submitted by: Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)  
May 20, 2016**

The Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) would like to submit the following comments regarding the final draft of the 9th Edition of the MA State Building Code ("780 CMR"), approved by the Board of Building Regulations and Standards ("BBRS") on January 12, 2016.

Thank you for providing the opportunity to comment on the draft 9<sup>th</sup> Edition of the Building Code. MAPC is the regional planning agency serving 101 cities and towns in the greater Boston region. MAPC has helped many of its member communities successfully navigate the Green Communities program. We have worked closely with the Department of Energy Resources (DOER) to provide this support and develop recommendations for the continued evolution of the Green Communities program, including the significant role the Stretch Energy Code has played and should continue playing in advancing community-wide building energy efficiency.

We commend BBRS for its proactive approach to energy code revisions in its quest to remain the most energy-efficient state in the nation. The draft represents a significant improvement over the state's existing Base Code. In addition to the presence of incrementally more energy-efficient performance requirements throughout the draft, MAPC is pleased to see the inclusion of mandatory requirements for electric vehicle (EV) charging spaces in section C405.10 and solar-readiness for roofs in section C402.3.

While the draft represents a progressive benchmark for minimum building codes in the state, the proposed Stretch Energy Code listed in Appendix AA represents a lesser degree of improvement over the Base Code than our leading Green Communities have come to expect. Adopting an Energy Rating Index (ERI) approach and requiring a maximum HERS rating of 55 for new residential buildings represents a step in the right direction. However, there are no requirements beyond what is included in the draft Stretch Code for renovations, remodels, or any other kind of alterations to existing buildings, which comprise the vast majority of available energy savings opportunities. Additionally, only buildings 100,000 square feet or larger have to comply with the requirement of modeled efficiency 10% beyond the level set by ASHRAE Standard 90.1-2013. Requirements that are modestly more robust could leverage these opportunities and serve to uphold the effectiveness of a progressive energy code.

MAPC proposes that BBRS revise the draft Stretch Code to:

**1) Include simple requirements for existing buildings**, such as existing commercial buildings 5,000 sq. ft. or larger and a modest ratcheting down of the HERS rating required for existing homes;



**2) Establish reduced efficiency targets for new commercial buildings less than 100,000 sq. ft.**

A modest efficiency level increase for buildings larger than 10,000 sq. ft., 25,000 sq. ft., or even 50,000 sq. ft. could touch many more buildings and leverage that potential in the majority of cities and towns; and

**3) Establish reduced efficiency targets for new residential buildings.** We encourage BBRS to explore options for new homes to achieve lower HERS index ratings and to integrate additional renewable energy into construction while still meeting incrementally reduced energy efficiency performance ratings.

Further, MAPC also suggests eliminating Exception 3 under section C402.3 of the draft Base Code for rooftop parking areas, as solar parking canopies can serve as a valuable multi-benefit application, providing cost savings, generating clean energy, and creating protection from the weather. Solar parking canopies could be neatly tied to EV charging stations as well.

Through the *Massachusetts Clean Energy and Climate Plan for 2020*, the Commonwealth has demonstrated its commitment to being a leader in greenhouse gas (GHG), energy, and economic savings. The building code is highlighted as a measure in the recent update to the Plan that can generate GHG savings. With 155 Green Communities already designated in the state, and more to come, improvements to the Stretch Code represent an excellent opportunity to achieve significant GHG reduction gains that can bring the Commonwealth closer to the 25% emissions reduction required by 2025.

Thank you for taking our comments into consideration. Please contact Cammy Peterson, Director of Clean Energy, at [cp@mapc.org](mailto:cp@mapc.org) with any questions on these comments.