

March 18, 2022

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

Re: Stretch Code Straw Proposal Comments

Dear Commissioner Woodcock, Secretary Theoharides, and Secretary Kennealy,

The Sustainability Committee of the Town of Weston implores you to make both the updated building “stretch code” and the “specialized opt-in stretch code” as rigorous as possible, and plan for their implementation as rapidly as possible, given the climate crisis that is upon us. Weston’s Town Manager Leon Gaumond stands with the committee on this topic.

The committee had been actively considering to present at town meeting a bylaw for our own town that would prohibit fossil fuel-burning infrastructure in new construction or major renovation; Attorney General Healey’s recent rejection of Brookline’s similar bylaw limiting gas hookups has forced us to put that plan on pause. We now turn our attention to the broader picture. We need DOER to make doing the right thing—which municipalities clearly want to do—legal in the Commonwealth. To reach the 2030 emissions reduction goal mandated by the Act Creating a Next Generation Roadmap for Massachusetts Climate Policy, we must swiftly enact and implement an effective stretch code update together with a true net zero opt-in code.

We know your task is not easy, but respectfully request that you strengthen the Straw Proposal for Stretch Code as publicly presented in order to:

- Ensure newly constructed or significantly overhauled homes and workspaces are healthy, resilient, and future-proofed by mandating electrification or renewable energy instead of oil, gas, or propane burning on site;
- Sufficiently improve energy efficiency standards to support Passive House or net zero buildings, yielding buildings that are affordable to heat and cool, especially for low-income residents; not requiring net zero now only burdens these residents with the cost of decarbonizing later;
- Account for or curb embodied carbon emissions related to construction;
- Require and incentivize recognized Green Communities to adopt the opt-in specialized stretch code; and
- Begin implementation upon approval.

It is impossible to overstate the urgency of pushing forward on climate-stabilizing efforts in every way we can. Please develop a true net zero stretch code that municipalities can opt into, and mandate for Massachusetts the best building design and construction practices already happening today.

Sincerely, with concern,

Sandy Kendall, Phoebe Beierle, Katharina Wilkins, David Ayer, Alyson Muzila, Alex Selvig, Chris Jylkka
(Members of the Sustainability Committee of the Town of Weston)
Leon Gaumond (Town Manager)