



SMART GROWTH AND REGIONAL COLLABORATION

Comment Letter Guidance
for the Board of Building Regulations and Standards (BBRS)
regarding a potential Net Zero Stretch Code

Background:

On May 12, 2020, the Massachusetts Board of Building Regulations and Standards (BBRS) held its bi-annual Public Comment Hearing virtually via Go to Meeting. There were six code proposals on a range of topics in front of the Board, including the Massachusetts E-Z Code, a prescriptive Net Zero code option proposed as an update to the Stretch Energy Code. MAPC was one of many partners helping to develop the E-Z Code, led by the Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnerships (NEEP) in conjunction with industry experts and other project partners.

The BBRS has indicated over the course of the last year that it would like to hear from Massachusetts municipalities on the issue of what an update to the Stretch Code could look like and on the applicability of a Net Zero energy code to communities in Massachusetts. At the May 12th hearing, several municipalities were able to provide testimony in support of a Net Zero code pathway. The Board requested that written comments be submitted by June 1, 2020, in response to topics on the May 12th agenda.

About the Massachusetts E-Z Code:

We anticipate that, in 2022, the BBRS will update the Massachusetts Base and Stretch Energy Code to the 10th Edition. The state code will be based on the 2021 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC), which many Massachusetts municipalities voted on this fall. Based on past precedents, the State will also likely amend the 2021 IECC to increase specific efficiency requirements when adopted as the State's Base Building Energy Code.

AIA Massachusetts also previously submitted a code change proposal to the BBRS to amend the current Appendix 115 AA (the stretch energy code). The AIA MA Zero Code proposal functions to largely adopt the IECC 2021 Zero Code Renewable Energy Appendix (ZCREA).

The MA E-Z Code proposal seeks to incorporate and enhance the AIA MA Zero Code proposal by addressing the need for a flexible and comprehensive framework to rapidly pursue the Commonwealth's GHG emissions reduction goals for new commercial buildings and major renovations. The AIA MA Zero Code is based on the 2021 IECC efficiency provisions and adds requirements for renewable energy into the Stretch Energy Code. The MA E-Z Code proposal would build on this proposal with an alternate compliance path that requires deep energy efficiency and electrification in addition to renewable energy that is sourced locally and cleanly, including a rooftop solar mandate. This code is structured as a prescriptive path, meaning a developer could comply with this pathway without conducting energy modeling. A prescriptive path can provide helpful and inexpensive guidance to developers to construct a net zero building.

How to Submit:

Comment letters should be submitted to the Board by **June 1, 2020**.

The letter can be attached to an email and emailed to Chief Robert Anderson (robert.anderson@mass.gov), with Dan Walsh at DPS cc'd (dan.p.walsh@mass.gov)

In the body of your email, indicate that your comments relate to proposal 05-06-2020 and the May 12, 2020 BBRS Public Comment Hearing.

Sample Letter Language:

May XX, 2020

TO: Robert Anderson
Chief of Inspections
MA Office of Public Safety and Inspections
1000 Washington St., Suite 710
Boston, MA 02118

Re: Comments from Municipality in support of the Massachusetts E-Z Code (Proposal 05-06-2020) as an update to the Massachusetts Stretch Energy Code, pursuant to 780 CMR Chapter 115 AA

Dear Chief Anderson,

We would like to thank the Board of Building Regulations and Standards for inviting comments on building code proposals, both at the virtual public comment hearing on May 12, 2020 and subsequently through written letters. We appreciate the Board's efforts to continue to engage the public and municipalities through virtual meetings at this time.

We are writing today with our support for Proposal 05-06-2020, the Energy-Zero Code (E-Z Code) proposal, as we recognize the importance of a robust and consistent Stretch Energy Code that preserves the safety of our residents and enables the health and resiliency of their future. We look forward to working with the BBRS on developing updates to the Stretch Energy Code, and to engaging in discussions with a broad range of municipalities across the Commonwealth.

Background

- Who you represent: Where your municipality is located, population, information about energy use in the municipality
- Your net zero, climate, or energy efficiency targets: How do these align with State targets, i.e. the State's net zero commitment (referenced by Governor Baker in his State of the Commonwealth this January) and Global Warming Solutions Act or Green Communities Act requirements? What types of steps has your municipality taken toward this goal?
- Engagement with codes: Have you attended BBRS meetings or followed/participated in the vote on the 2021 IECC?
- Why is it important that the board hear from your municipality on this issue?

The Massachusetts E-Z Code (Proposal 05-06-2020)

- Share your reasons for supporting this proposal.
- Why does it matter to your municipality that the Stretch Energy Code is updated or that a net zero code pathway is adopted? This is a good place to highlight how the current code limits your municipality's ability to meet your targets, or to highlight support from residents.
- Which aspect of this code proposal, i.e. stronger energy efficiency, renewable energy requirements, or shifts to electrification, would be particularly beneficial to your municipality and why? How do these align with your community's goals and demands?
- What next steps would you like to participate in? Can the Board reach you for further discussion? Will you attend future meetings, or follow the progress of this code proposal?

Thank you for your time and attention to this urgent and important matter.

Sincerely,
Municipal Official