

Consumer Engagement in Energy Codes



Why target consumers?

- In 2011, BCAP and Consumers Union began outreach to raise consumers' awareness of energy codes
- Consumers can be a counterweight to our biggest barrier – opposition from home builders.
- It's hard to make policy changes without public support.
- In communities where public support is high, energy codes are easier to adopt.
- So... HOW to educate consumers?
 - THE FIRST STEP: Find out what motivates them.

BCAP & Consumers Union conducted a survey to consumers

- **What messages resonate with consumers?**
 1. Money saving?
 2. Environmental impacts?
 3. Quality construction?
 4. General benefits?
 5. Common arguments against energy codes?

5,086 Internet respondents- demographics:

- 50% Males/50% Females; Age 18+; About 2/3 own homes
- Most (79%) purchased their homes more than 2 years ago and don't have near-term plans to buy another home.
- Most (84%) had an annual HH income of \$79K or less.
- Most had ave. mo. energy bills of \$100-\$199.
- Results broken out into these sub-categories

Respondents were from these regions

Northeast:

- 1. New England - ME, NH, VT, MA, RI, CT*
- 2. Mid-Atlantic - NY, PA, NJ*

Midwest:

- 1. East North Central - WI, MI, IL, IN, OH*
- 2. West North Central - MO, ND, SD, NE, KS, MN, IA*

South:

- 1. South Atlantic: DE, MD, DC, VA, WV, NC, SC, GA, FL*
- 2. East South Central: KY, TN, MS, AL*
- 3. West South Central: OK, TX, AK, LA*

West:

- Mountain: ID, MT, WY, NV, UT, CO, AZ, NM*
- Pacific: AL, WA, OR, CA, HA*

Statement Prior to Survey

Energy codes are minimum requirements that builders must meet to ensure that homes meet energy efficiency standards.

Consumers agreed with the following statements:

- **Homebuilders should not make less efficient homes at the consumers' expense. (73%)**
- Energy codes would help my energy bills be more affordable and predictable. (71%)
- **Energy codes help make homes more comfortable to live in. (68%)**
- Energy code standards will help to ensure quality home construction. (70%)

Consumers agreed with the following statements:

- Energy codes should be enforced like other safety and quality standards of construction. (75%)
- **Homeowners should have a right to a home that meets national energy standards. (82%)**
- Energy code standards will help ensure that homeowner and taxpayer dollars are used wisely and efficiently as new building will be required to be built right the first time. (74%)
- **I would rather pay slightly more for a new home and have affordable, predictable operating costs and energy bills. (79%)**

What did we do
with the results?

Helped Influence Policy

- Show that constituents want energy efficiency
- Combat common arguments against energy codes
- Ohio as an example
 - Call-to-action resulted in over 1,000 e-mails
 - Survey results were core of Consumers Union testimony
 - Results used in press releases, op-eds and other forms of media outreach

Developed Resources for Consumers, Advocates, and Professionals

1. Consumer Guide
2. Home Guide
3. Home Checklist
4. Advocate Guide
5. Consumer Handout
6. Professional Handout
7. Realtor Handout

Consumers Union Outreach

ENERGY CODES:

What Consumers Need to Know

KNOW YOUR ENERGY RIGHTS

You have a right to a home that meets national standards for energy efficiency!

Energy Codes design and construction of the overall home or local

BUILDING IMPORTANT

SAVE YOU

Buying a home with energy efficiency can save you money on utility costs, which in turn can save you money on your property taxes.

KNOW YOUR ENERGY RIGHTS

By making sure your home meets energy efficiency standards, you can help reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.

ENERGY CODES:

What Advocates Need to Know

KNOW YOUR ENERGY RIGHTS

We don't often think about how much energy used in buildings impacts society. Yet buildings account for over 40 percent of total energy use in the United States—more than either the transportation or industrial sectors.

Energy Codes are minimum requirements for efficient design and construction for new and renovated residential and commercial buildings. They form part of the overall building code that is adopted by state and local governments.

BUILDING ENERGY CODES ARE IMPORTANT BECAUSE THEY:

REDUCE ENERGY CONSUMPTION AND GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Most buildings waste energy needlessly, which is a serious problem, because over one-third of total U.S. greenhouse gas emissions come from the building sector. Adopting and enforcing energy codes will reduce building energy consumption, and help mitigate the impacts of climate change. In addition, it will...

SAVE CONSUMERS MONEY

The average U.S. home spends about \$2,025 on energy bills each year. Meanwhile, in 2008, the commercial sector spent an estimated \$182 billion on non-renewable energy expenditures. Energy efficient buildings reduce utility bills and put money back into consumers' and companies' pockets. Millions of additional dollars could then be used to...



HOME ENERGY CODE GUIDE:

A Consumer Guide to Minimum Standards for Energy Efficiency

KNOW YOUR ENERGY RIGHTS

If you are interested in purchasing a quality home—or want to learn more about how to make your home more energy efficient—this checklist provides a quick way to assess home energy performance and identify opportunities to improve energy efficiency.

When builders install energy-efficient features, it's a good idea to make sure they will use them properly.

This can help you make sure your home is energy efficient.



compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) are a good choice for energy-efficient lighting.

HOME ENERGY CODE CHECKLIST:

KNOW YOUR ENERGY RIGHTS

If you are interested in buying a home or want to learn about the energy code and how to make your home more energy efficient, this checklist provides a quick way to assess energy performance and identify opportunities to improve energy efficiency.

This checklist helps you spot check for national minimum requirements set forth in the 2009 International Energy Conservation Code. While this checklist doesn't include every requirement, it will help you assess a new home and make an informed decision about the quality of construction and the likelihood that the home will use energy efficiently.

ENERGY CERTIFICATE

- Energy Certificate located on circuit breaker box is completed and signed. (See reverse side for examples and more details.)

AIR SEALING

- All holes between floors and through walls have been sealed with caulk or foam. Examples include:
 - where phone cables enter the house
 - where plumbing goes through walls, floors, and ceiling

THERMOSTAT

- If a forced air heating system is being installed, the home has a programmable thermostat.

DUCTS

- IN ATTIC:**
 - Ceiling and walls are insulated, or
 - Ducts are sealed and insulated to a value of R-6.

WHOLE HOUSE:

- All ducts are sealed with mastic.

LIGHTING

- At least half of the home's light fixtures have high efficiency lights.

BASEMENT

- The fireplace doors are sealed with gaskets.

INSULATION

- Crawl space walls and/or the crawl space ceiling are properly insulated.
- Access hatch or door is weather-stripped and insulated.

WINDOWS

- Windows and skylights meet the minimum requirements for U-factors and SHGCs. Visit www.finehomebuilding.com/resources/energycode.html for more details on your climate zone.
- EXISTING HOMES: Evaluate windows for age, quality and air tightness.

TESTS

- A blower door test resulted in a score of seven air changes per hour (ACH) or less, if applicable.
- The blower tested ducts for air leakage.

ALTERNATIVE COMPLIANCE PATH

- If these requirements are not met, ask your contractor for documentation showing the home meets minimum standards for energy consumption.

BUYING A NEW HOME? REMODELING?

Make sure it's built right.

You could be buying a home that will be uncomfortable and waste money!

With colder weather coming, you may be dreading rising utility bills and uncomfortable drafts in your home.

When homes are built or remodeled, builders are supposed to construct them according to regulations set by energy codes, which are minimum requirements for energy efficiency.

Energy efficient homes use less energy, resulting in lower utility bills and a more comfortable home, as well as environmental benefits. A home built to the model code can save you \$200 every year.

Talk to your builder. Make sure your home meets the state or local energy code!

For more information on home energy efficiency and to see if your home meets the code, please visit agreenerfuture.org.

aGREENERFuture.org

WORKING FOR CLEAN, RENEWABLE, AFFORDABLE ENERGY

ConsumersUnion

POLICY & ACTION FROM CONSUMER REPORTS



HOMEOWNERS WANT ENERGY EFFICIENT HOMES!

Protect your customers.

Please ensure that their home meets 2009 IECC.

82% of consumers surveyed* believe that homeowners should have a right to a home that meets national energy standards. 79% said that they would rather pay slightly more for a new home and have affordable, predictable operating costs and energy bills.

Every dollar spent on energy efficiency upgrades in a home yields \$6 in savings! A home built to the 2009 International Energy Conservation Code will save homeowners hundreds of dollars a year on their utility bills, make their home more comfortable, and help the environment.

Most homeowners expect that their home is being built to a high energy efficiency standard and associate energy efficiency with high quality construction. Please protect your customers and help ensure that their home meets 2009 IECC.

For more consumer information, please visit agreenerfuture.org/codes. And for more information on how to build to the latest Energy Code, please visit www.nhenergycode.com.

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WORKING FOR CLEAN, RENEWABLE, AFFORDABLE ENERGY

ConsumersUnion

POLICY & ACTION FROM CONSUMER REPORTS

*Survey of 5,000 consumers conducted by Consumer Reports, 2011
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HOME BUYERS WANT ENERGY EFFICIENT HOMES!

Show off a home's energy efficient qualities.

It's what consumers want!

79% of consumers surveyed said that they would rather pay slightly more for a new home and have affordable, predictable operating costs and energy bills. 82% believe that homeowners should have a right to a home that meets national energy standards.**

What are the selling points of an energy efficient home? Superior quality of construction, year-round comfort, improved air quality, lower energy costs, mortgage savings, and higher resale value potential. Just to name a few!***

For more consumer information, please visit agreenerfuture.org/codes. And for more information on home energy efficient features, please visit www.nhenergycode.com.

**Survey of 5,000 consumers conducted by Consumer Reports, 2011
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A GREENER ENERGY FUTURE

Working for clean, renewable, affordable energy

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Build Better, Live Better. *Know your energy rights!*

MAINE MICHIGAN NEW HAMPSHIRE OHIO



Please use our publications to learn more:

For Consumers:

For Professionals:



Consumer Guide



Home Guide



Home Checklist



Professional Handout



Consumer Handout



For Advocates

If you are interested in receiving hard copies of any of these resources, please contact [Stacy Weisfeld](#) for more information.

*We are encouraging professionals and advocates to distribute the consumer handout to the public. We would like to see them in as many office buildings, lobbies, libraries, community centers and other locations as possible!

Greener Choices Home > Home Energy Codes 8/11

Make Sure Your Home Meets Minimum National Standards for Energy Efficiency!

What are Energy Codes?

Energy Codes are minimum requirements for efficient design and construction for new and renovated residential and commercial buildings. They form part of the overall building code that is adopted by your state or local government.

Building energy codes ARE IMPORTANT because they:

• **SAVE YOU MONEY ON OPERATING COSTS**

Buying a home is likely the most expensive investment you will ever make. Before you buy, you should think about how much it'll cost to run it.

• **PROTECT YOU AND YOUR FAMILY**

By making sure your home was built to the model energy code, you can protect yourself and your family against high utility bills and shoddy construction.

• **ARE A COST-EFFECTIVE INVESTMENT**

It's much more cost-effective to build a home that meets the model energy code, than try to improve its efficiency later on through an expensive retrofit. When energy efficiency investments are spread out over the term of a standard mortgage, owners usually realize net savings within the first year!

• **REDUCE ENERGY USE AND POLLUTION**

Buildings use about 40% of all the energy we use, and contribute to one-third of total U.S.



Did you know that the average U.S. home spends \$2,175 on utility costs per year? That's over \$180 per month! Buildings constructed to meet the model energy code use less energy, which reduces utility bills—and puts money back into your pocket.

Print this page



If you are buying a new home, you have a right to an energy-efficient home that meets national

standards.

Free downloadable publications

Learn more about the energy code and how to identify construction that meets code requirements!

Home Energy Code Guide (PDF)

An in-depth guide to home energy performance, including key features to look for to determine if your home meets national energy code standards.

See also the **Interactive Energy Code Guide**

Home Energy Code Checklist (PDF)

A 2-page summary checklist to determine if your home meets national energy code standards, and a guide on how to read the Energy Code Certificate that builders must post in new or substantially renovated homes.

Energy Codes: What Consumers Need to Know (PDF)

Fact sheet on home energy codes

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Brought to you by the Building Codes Assistance Project

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Get information on energy codes and compliance. **LEARN**

Share your knowledge and resources with the community. **SHARE**

Work with others to improve and expand code resources. **CONNECT**

Get Started

Getting Started
Everything you need to get started in the energy codes world!

Consumer Materials
Your guide to the energy code, co-hosted by Consumers Union!

Code Status Maps
Commercial | Residential Implementation | International Status

Resource Guide for Policy Makers
A useful tool from DOE

Compliance Planning
The road to 90% compliance begins here!

The True Cost of New Construction
It's more affordable than you think!

Code Development Energy Cost and Savings

Latest Code News
DOE Announces G Energy Efficient K-1
Building Codes As VT Energy Code Co
DOE Extends Com Analysis Methodol
Just Released: The IECC/ASHRAE 90.1
Donations for Lind Study Scholarship

Consumers: Take Action



Energy Code Awareness Campaign

Brought to you in
partnership with

ConsumersUnion.org
Nonprofit Publisher of Consumer Reports

You have a right to an energy-efficient home that meets national standards.

Homes built to the model energy code save money and reduce energy use and pollution. Use these consumer resources to learn about the energy code, demand energy-efficient construction and help spread the word.



Energy Code Checklist

Learn the energy code basics and how to identify construction that meets code

Interactive Energy Code Guide

Dive into the energy code in greater depth

Find Your Energy Code

A step-by-step guide to finding out the energy code in your location

Why Energy Codes Matter PowerPoint

Spread the word on energy codes

State-specific Resources

Materials specific to a few states

86% of homeowners want to know a home's energy operating costs before they buy or rent.

82% of homeowners believe they have a right to homes that meet national standards.

77% of homeowners think that homebuilders should not make less efficient homes at the consumer's expense.

2011 Consumers Union Survey

About the Consumer Campaign

BCAP and Consumers Union are excited to launch a new effort to educate the public on the impact of home energy use, the role of energy codes in addressing home energy performance, and what you can do to save energy—and money.

Our primary goal is to educate and engage everyone in support of energy codes. You have a right to a home that meets national standards for energy efficiency.

[Read more about the Consumer Campaign >](#)



CURRENT OPPORTUNITY

- BCAP and CU have funding to assist several states in creating a campaign
 - Co-brand materials;
 - Disseminate materials via local jurisdictions, events, home shows, newsletters, website links
 - Media outreach: news releases, magazine articles, TV, radio
- Together, we can help build consumer support for energy codes.

Contacts

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bcap-ocean.org/consumers-take-action

AGreenerFuture.org/Codes