

NASEO Buildings Committee Call Notes
Thursday, January 26, 3:30 – 4:30 ET

Participants:

Colorado		Cadmus
North Carolina	ASHRAE	BPI
Pennsylvania	SRA International	EPA ENERGY STAR
Washington	SAIC	Energy Services Coalition

Welcome & Introductions

Ward Lenz, Director of the North Carolina State Energy Office, welcomed everyone to the call and introduced the first presentation on building energy code consumer outreach.

Building Energy Codes

[See [NASEO's Buildings Committee page](#) for a copy of the slides.]

Maria Ellingson from BCAP gave an overview of the BCAP/Consumers Union energy code awareness project. BCAP wanted to reach out to consumers because they are in a strong position to drive the market for building code compliance and give support to policy changes. The goal of this project was to determine how to educate consumers; the first step in this process was figuring out what motivates them.

Stacy Weisfeld from Consumers Union gave a brief overview of her organization. This BCAP collaboration was the first time they have become involved in buildings codes work. They wanted to determine what message(s) resonate with customers in terms of building quality, energy performance, and building energy codes. Their survey work reached over 5,000 internet respondents from all across the country.

Some interesting results include:

- 73% of consumers agree that homebuilders should not make less efficient homes at the consumer's expense.
- 70% of consumers agree that energy code standards help ensure quality home construction.
- 82% of consumers agreed that homeowners should have a right to a home that meets national energy standards.

Please refer to the full presentation for more survey research results.

Based on this research about consumer attitudes and response to messaging, BCAP and Consumers Union developed a series of resources for consumers, realtors, and advocates. These are designed to educate and empower consumers as they make purchasing decisions to demand industry compliance with building energy codes. Resources include toolkits, a home energy code checklist, and 'door-hanger' handouts. These materials and research were used to great effect in Ohio where citizens stepped forward to provide personal testimonies to the code committees responsible for developing and adopting building codes.

State Energy Offices can download these for free and distribute to advocates, stakeholders, and consumers in their states on the [BCAP \(OCEAN\)](#) and [Consumers Union](#) websites, and at www.agreenerfuture.org. BCAP and CU have funding to assist four states, and they asked for suggestions from participants on the call. Dennis from Pennsylvania responded that he would be interested.

A question was asked about whether there were any resources for tenants. BCAP and CU said that this would be a good area to develop in the future. ASHRAE asked whether there would be a similar campaign targeting commercial buildings. This project focuses on residential homes.

Residential Workforce Update

Jack Werner provided an update on residential workforce activity, following up on conversation from the buildings committee meeting at the last NASEO conference. Jack is doing some work for DOE to help weatherization training centers engaged in an accreditation process. DOE has some seed money to help a few of these centers work through the application process. Another aspect of this project is credentialing the actual workers who are trained by the centers. BPI is involved in this activity as well. Jack wanted to see if there was some interest in following-up on some of this at the annual meeting in a few weeks.

Ward asked whether this activity is ARRA related and if it expires soon. Jack responded that seed money to help training centers through the application process is ARRA related, but that this is just part of a broader training process happening in the states that will exist beyond ARRA.

Dennis from Pennsylvania wanted to know if they are on the list for the seed money. It is a disjointed process in PA, which has five weatherization training centers. They are currently working with BPI to help people go through that program and go on to work with BPI and with the Keystone Help program. Dennis' understanding is that DOE made an announcement that the hard-stop that was previously announced for March 30 no longer exists for weatherization activities under ARRA.

Ward emphasized that each state should make sure that this information is confirmed with their program officer. There might be different guidelines for different states.

Commercial Buildings Update

Ward gave a brief overview of the SEE Action Existing Commercial Buildings Working Group and referred people to their website (www.seeaction.energy.gov) as a source of ideas for commercial buildings policies and programs for their states.

Dale Hahs provided an announcement regarding the Energy Services Coalition National Meeting. They have been excited to work with NASEO on increasing the speed and scale of commercial building retrofits. There is a real need to get the ESPC folks from different states together for some peer sharing. They are in the final stages of planning their first national meeting in the fall (Sept/Oct) in Nashville, not to conflict with the NASEO meeting in Minneapolis. They are hoping to be able to support travel and lodging expenses for public sector workers interested in attending the meeting. Dale will provide further updates on this in the future.

General Buildings

Ward described the recent "Better Buildings through Executive Action" report from USGBC and 15 other sponsor organizations, including NASEO. The report recommends nearly three dozen executive actions across 23 existing agency programs that can be taken now without new legislation to improve buildings. Some of the opportunities identified include updating guidance on the 179D commercial building tax deduction and integrating building energy efficiency and sustainability into U.S. Dept. of Commerce's Economic Development Administration. The [report](#) and a [press release](#) can be downloaded online

Lane Burt, USGBC's Technical Policy Director provided some additional information on this effort. The report is a follow-up to the 2010 report that describes opportunities where the executive branch has legal authority to improve energy efficiency in the U.S. building stock without new legislation. Overall, there is

significant authority for the executive branch to take action. This report a jumping off point for organizations like NASEO to engage some of the agencies they work closely with. It provides legal justification for making suggestions regarding building energy efficiency measures. In the past, stakeholders have sent letters supporting this report to agencies they have a relationship with, and included their three priority recommendations. This approach can be effective at turning these recommendations into action.

State Discussion on NASEO Building Energy Codes Activity

Ward provided a brief overview of a recent NASEO Board resolution, “Supporting Utility Involvement in Energy-Efficient Building Codes.” The resolution encourages SEOs to engage with utilities in pushing for building energy code improvements and to enable the utilities to get credit for this activity.

An Affiliate member noted that it was very helpful for utilities to get involved in buildings codes. In Washington, utilities receive funding to cover their expenditures related to energy efficiency. In Washington, the treatment of energy savings for the first years after a code goes into effect was written into legislation, so there a cost-benefit test is not required.

Ward mentioned that NASEO will be developing some additional resources alongside this resolution, including white papers, state case studies, and webinars, and state feedback is important in this process.

SAIC asked whether the resolution covers existing facilities. If it doesn't, then this activity will only have an impact once states start building again. Ward said that NASEO has not been focusing as much on existing buildings as it could. One possibility NASEO is exploring is starting a subcommittee on buildings codes and the issue of existing buildings could be explored in that committee.

An announcement was made regarding an upcoming [webinar on Code Compliance Strategies](#) hosted by IMT. It is taking place on February 23 at 2:00pm EST. NASEO is co-sponsoring this webinar.

State Discussion on Future Buildings Webinars

Chris Wagner, NASEO Buildings Project Manager, described that a priority in 2012 is to partner with other organizations to host informative webinars for NASEO members. Some potential topics include high-performance schools and new appliance standards. NASEO is also exploring the development of a Buildings training curriculum for SEO staff, especially for new hires. Chris and Ward asked the states for any suggestions on topics to cover in the future. Two that were mentioned were PACE loans/clean energy loans and on-bill (tariff) financing. Ward mentioned that there is a financing committee where some of these topics might be covered. Todd Currier from Washington mentioned that the SEEAAction effort may produce some resources that might be good topics for webinars.

One additional question was asked regarding whether NASEO had a stance on the benchmarking and disclosure laws in certain states, which can serve as a barrier to focusing on existing buildings. Ward said that this was a good point and serves as an additional reason for NASEO to increase its focus on existing buildings.

Next Meeting Date

Ward encouraged members to attend the NASEO-ASERTTI Energy Outlook conference, February 7-10 in Washington, DC. The Buildings Committee meet on February 9 from 2:30 – 4:30pm. View the agenda and register online at <http://energyoutlook.naseo.org/>. The next bi-monthly call will be in April, date and time TBD.