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NBI'S CORE PERFORMANCE ADOPTED AS PART OF MASSACHUSETTS STRETCH CODE

The Massachusetts Board of Building Regulations and Standards voted Tuesday to adopt a stretch energy code for the state that would make new commercial buildings under 100,000 square feet up to 30% more energy efficient than base standards and reduce carbon emissions by nearly 40%. The new rules will mean significant energy cost savings for building owners and tenants who pay some of the highest electricity rates in the country.

The stretch code applies to new and existing building types including residential, but the standards related to new, small- and mid-sized commercial buildings are based on a protocol developed by New Buildings Institute (NBI) called Core Performance. NBI, a nonprofit organization working to improve the energy performance of commercial buildings, created Core Performance as a direct path to high performance building that does not require modeling. The *Core Performance Guide* describes a set of simple, discrete design strategies that when applied under an integrated design process result in an energy-efficient building that is cheaper to operate and more comfortable for occupants.

Several Massachusetts utilities and energy service providers including National Grid, NSTAR, Western Massachusetts Electric Company and Cape Light Compact currently offer financial and technical support for commercial buildings designed using Core Performance. NBI has been working along with Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnerships to support efforts to bring this new stretch code to the state.

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“Buildings consume two-thirds of the U.S. power supply and emit nearly half of the greenhouse gases, said Dave Hewitt, NBI executive director. “Reach [or stretch] codes are the best way to lock in the energy savings and carbon reduction benefits of high performance building and bring those numbers down. Massachusetts is the first state to take this important and necessary step. We expect others will take note of Massachusetts’ leadership and follow suit,” he said.

In addition to energy savings the new code could mean new jobs, according to early findings of a study by the Institute for Market Transformation (IMT). The study showed that 30% improvements in building energy efficiency add little to initial construction costs, but shift spending from materials to labor. IMT estimates that advanced codes, such as those adopted in Massachusetts, could create more than 20,000 new jobs nationally.

Effective immediately, municipalities in the state can choose whether to adopt the code, 780 CMR 120.AA, as a more energy-efficient alternative to the base energy code. The Core Performance basic requirements in the stretch code include efficiency standards for measures such as window performance, lighting controls, mechanical equipment efficiency and demand-control ventilation. Local government entities could go further and adopt up to 14 measures described in Core Performance as “enhanced performance strategies.” These include additional improvements such as heat recovery, night venting, daylighting, plug load controls and appliance efficiency.

Alternatively, a project team could provide documentation that the building’s energy requirements are at least 20% below the ASHRAE 90.1-2007 standard, a model energy code developed by the American Society of Heating, Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Engineers.

For more information on Core Performance and advanced energy codes, visit www.advancedbuildings.net and www.newbuildings.org/codes.htm, respectively. For a copy of Massachusetts’ new stretch code, visit www.mass.gov/Eeops/docs/dps/inf/120_AA_Stretch_Code_Final.pdf.

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Core Performance is the cornerstone of NBI’s suite of advanced design guidance for high performance building called Advanced Buildings. New Buildings Institute (NBI) is a nonprofit organization working to improve the energy performance of commercial buildings.