

THE UNIFORM BUILDING CODE COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATION: A GOOD COMPROMISE FOR UTAH

Adopting the **full 2015 energy code** in Utah is cost effective for new homes and commercial buildings:

- Each new home built to the full 2015 energy code will save an average of **\$297 per year** and realize a **24% reduction** of energy use.¹
- Homebuyers will **recoup** the initial cost increase and experience “positive cash flow” through lowered energy costs **within 2 years**.²
- Increase in construction costs range from approximately \$1,000 to \$3,300 for a typical home.³

THE COMMISSION'S CURRENT PROPOSAL

The Uniform Building Code Commission has prepared a recommendation to adopt the full 2015 energy code for new commercial buildings and the 2015 energy code for new homes with **numerous weakening amendments**, including:

- Reduced stringency for whole home air tightness and air duct tightness;
- Less stringent ERI values and deletion of insulation and window efficiency requirements; and
- The option to continue using an old version of a compliance software called **REScheck**, as long as the home exceeds the previous 2012 energy code by 10%. This method permits considerably less efficient exterior walls to be built, which are nearly impossible to retrofit after the fact, but was added as a compromise with home builders.

WHY UTAH CLEAN ENERGY SUPPORTS THE COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATION

- Although less stringent than the full 2015 residential code, the Commission's current proposal was reached through a 7-month process that studied the code elements in great detail, while making amendments to **address concerns from residential building contractors**.
- Comments from the public to the Commission was highly supportive of adopting an updated 2015 energy code.
- Regarding REScheck, **10% above code is reasonable** to demonstrate improved efficiency, but **anything lower than 10% will be a disservice to the public**.

¹ *Cost-Effectiveness Analysis of the Residential Provisions of the 2015 IECC for the State of Utah*, Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (June 2015).

² Positive cash flow is the most accurate measure of the cost effectiveness to Utah families.

³ Actual construction cost increases depend on climate zone and whether there is a basement (heated or unheated or slab foundation).

WHY DO WE NEED UPDATED ENERGY CODES?

Provide Financial Benefits to Utahns

- Adopting the full 2015 energy code would save Utah families living in new homes **\$297 every year**.⁴
- This translates into **\$1.1 billion** reduced energy costs through 2040.⁵
- Adopting the Commission's recommended **amended residential energy code** would still save families money, although less than if the full code were adopted.

Meet Consumer Demand

- 91% of Utahns are willing to pay more upfront for more energy efficient, less pollution-producing homes.⁶
- 84% of consumers nationally are willing to spend 2-3% more for efficient homes.⁷
- A \$250,000 home built to the full 2015 energy code would cost 1.2% more.

Help Clean Utah's Air

- Homes and buildings currently emit 39% of Utah's local air pollution.⁸
- The full 2015 energy code would reduce local air pollution by **2.3 million pounds** through 2050.⁹
- The reduced CO2 emissions are equal to removing 85,033 cars from Utah roads for 1 year.
- Adopting the Commission's recommended residential energy code would still save families money, although less than if the full code were adopted.



For more information contact Meghan Dutton: meghan@utahcleanenergy.org or (801) 903-2032

⁴ See note 1.

⁵ *Utah Residential Energy Code Analysis*, Building Code Assistance Project (2015).

⁶ Your Utah Your Future results, from: Deseret News article: *Poll: Utah residents are willing to invest in clean air* (September 25, 2015); available at <http://bit.ly/1hJySlu>.

⁷ *New Homes Increasingly Offer Efficiency and Sustainable Features*, National Association of Home Builders (March 30, 2015).

⁸ *2014 Emission Inventory*, Utah Department of Air Quality.

⁹ Emissions data is based on natural gas combustion emission factors from Utah Division of Air Quality (October 2015).