

March 9, 2026

TO: Chair Dave Baker and Members of the Workforce, Labor, and Economic Development Finance and Policy Committee
FROM: City of Northfield
SUBJECT: HF3545 – Residential Energy Code Requirement

I am writing on behalf of the City of Northfield, consistent with the City's Climate Action Plan, to provide perspective on HF3545, which would repeal the requirement to adopt a new residential energy code. I serve as the City's Sustainability Coordinator and help implement the Climate Action Plan.

Residential buildings represent a meaningful portion of Northfield's community emissions. In 2020, 86 percent of total emissions came from building energy use, with residential gas and electricity accounting for roughly 13 percent and 7 percent of that total, respectively. Improving energy efficiency in homes is a key strategy for reducing emissions and managing long-term energy costs for residents. Northfield's Climate Action Plan sets a goal of achieving a 100 percent carbon-free community by 2040, and residential building efficiency is central to that vision.

State residential energy codes provide an essential foundation for these efforts by establishing minimum efficiency standards for new construction across Minnesota. Adjusting or delaying code adoption could slow progress on building efficiency and reduce the tools available to communities striving to meet local climate and energy goals.

Northfield has already demonstrated the benefits of high-efficiency residential projects. For example, Hillcrest Village, a Net Zero Energy development led by the Community Action Center, brings together emergency shelter, transitional housing, and affordable workforce housing in a single, energy-efficient community. This project reduces operating costs and aligns social and climate goals, proving residential efficiency investments serve multiple community priorities.

Maintaining strong energy efficiency standards for new residential construction is a critical step in reducing emissions and enhancing long-term community resilience. Thank you for the opportunity to share this local perspective and for your consideration of how state policy intersects with municipal climate and energy priorities.

Sara Pabich

Sara Pabich, Northfield Sustainability Coordinator