



February 1st, 2023

TO: House Climate and Energy Finance and Policy Committee

FROM: Andrea Lovoll, Legislative Director, Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy

RE: Building Codes Legislation

Chair Acomb and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for your service to the people of Minnesota and thank you for the opportunity to testify on HF 772 (Kraft). Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy (MCEA) is a nonprofit organization with almost 50 years of experience using law and science to protect Minnesota's environment and the health of its people.

Building emissions are increasing and we need to reverse that trend

- Buildings emissions account for 12% of total greenhouse gas emissions in Minnesota, and unlike emissions from most other sectors, are increasing over time.
- We need to reverse this trend if we are going to achieve the emission reductions the science indicates are necessary to preserve a livable planet.
- One of the fastest and most cost-effective ways to achieve those emission reductions is to improve the energy efficiency of building envelopes, heating and cooling systems and appliances.
- We know from prior studies conducted in Minnesota that energy efficiency measures are a great investment because they decrease water use and reduce greenhouse gas emissions while creating high quality jobs, lowering utility bills for customers, and reducing infrastructure investment costs for utilities.

Updated building codes are essential for maximizing the energy efficiency of buildings

- Building codes help us achieve the benefits of energy efficiency by establishing minimum energy efficiency requirements for the design and construction of new buildings and their components and by specifying how to assess compliance with these standards.
- National building code standards are updated every few years to reflect state of the art approaches for maximizing building energy efficiency and safety, but Minnesota's building codes have not been updated to the most recent standard.
- This means we are missing a critical opportunity to reduce building energy waste and save money.
- Because the Inflation Reduction Act includes \$1 billion in grants from the Department of Labor and Industry for updating state building codes, and these funds will only remain for the next five years, now is the time to align our state building codes with the most recent national standards.

Summary

- HF 772 will help ensure our state reaps the benefits of more efficient buildings by ensuring that our state commercial building codes are updated regularly and put us on track to achieve a net zero standard within 15 years.
- We support this important legislation because it will reduce energy waste from buildings, while creating jobs and saving money for building owners and occupants.

Thank you,

Andrea Lovoll
Legislative Director
Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy
alovoll@mncenter.org