

Energy Efficiency = Better Buildings

Minnesotans from all walks of life see the benefits of energy efficiency every day. Energy efficient buildings keep us cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter. They save us money on our power bills, while reducing the amount of pollution we create by limiting our electricity waste.

Today, Minnesota has the opportunity to capture the full benefits of energy efficiency by improving our state's standards for new commercial buildings.



Setting the Right Standard

Minnesota sets statewide guidelines that require newly constructed buildings to meet certain energy efficiency standards. These building codes ensure that Minnesotans see the benefits of energy efficiency by prioritizing things like proper insulation and up-to-date lighting systems during the construction process.

It is important that Minnesota sets the right standards for our commercial buildings. Without current standards that reflect the most recent advancements in technology, new buildings constructed in our state will fall behind, with a significant impact on Minnesotans.



Why do our communities want better building standards?

Making buildings more energy efficient creates local jobs, saves money on energy bills, and reduces pollution resulting in cleaner air and healthier citizens. Communities across Minnesota are realizing the potential for energy efficiency to improve their quality of life and are calling for better building standards to make this a reality.

What do Minnesotans think about improving building standards?



In June of 2020, ALG Research conducted a statewide poll to gauge Minnesotans' opinion on adopting better energy efficiency standards for commercial buildings.

Overall – people supported the concepts behind the measure...

- 81% said they were in favor of requiring all new or gut-renovated multi-unit buildings to be more energy efficient.
- 79% favored a new statewide standard to ensure buildings are more energy-efficient.
- 65% favored requiring all new commercial buildings and larger apartment buildings to produce as much energy as they consume by taking steps such as installing solar panels by 2036.



Positive Impact

Voters understand the potential for positive impact. A majority of poll respondents said that adopting better efficiency standards for commercial buildings would have a positive impact on the safety of our air and water (80%), the health of Minnesota residents (76%), climate change (69%), jobs (62%), and Minnesota's economy (54%).



Key Concern

Cost is the primary concern that gives voters pause on this issue. Half of respondents said the guidelines would negatively impact the cost of living. It is important to remember that these new building standards would NOT be applied to single family homes – only to commercial and multifamily buildings that exceed three stories. Updating would not raise the cost of building new homes and will save building owners and renters money on long-term energy costs.



A Focus on Conservation

Poll respondents found conservation to be the most compelling argument for adopting stronger efficiency standards. Simply put – making new buildings more energy efficient will decrease overall demand for energy, which means we can conserve and protect our natural resources. Respondents also resonated with arguments that linked new building guidelines to a reduction in climate pollution and cleaner air.



New, Local Jobs

Respondents also felt the jobs argument to be compelling, particularly with those that were less influenced by other benefits. By adopting better efficiency standards, Minnesota could be a national leader in modernizing new construction. If we implement these standards, it will create 2,500 new construction jobs every year that can't be outsourced.

Contact Ben Rabe at rabe@fresh-energy.org for more information on the benefits Minnesota will see from leading on energy efficiency standards.