

AIA Colorado testimony for HB19-1260 Building Energy Codes

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My name is Nikolaus Remus, I'm an architect, and the Government Affairs Manager with the Colorado chapter of the American Institute of Architects. On behalf of our 2,400 members, AIA Colorado strongly supports HB19-1260.

Designing to newer energy codes will result in better quality and more energy-efficient buildings across the state of Colorado. This will in turn will save money throughout the lifespan of the building in reduced utility bills and will also result in lower greenhouse gas emissions in the state.

Without this bill, local jurisdictions may still use building energy codes as old as from 2003. Energy efficiency requirements typically increase every 3 years when the International Energy Conservation Code is updated. How big of a difference is that? The goal of the 2003 version of the code was a 10% improvement in energy use from baseline standards at the time. The 2018 version of the code is an estimated 50% improvement over that same baseline. Even updating to the 2012 code jumps from 10% to 42%¹. That energy use reduction is roughly proportional to a reduction in utility costs.

It's important to note that the goal of energy code isn't to reach for the stars. The increased requirements every new code edition are based on nationwide input from numerous stakeholder groups with attainable incremental improvements.

Passing this bill will also "level the playing field" for builders and developers, eliminating the possibility of crossing a municipal boundary in order to evade reasonable energy code criteria. This benefits all municipalities because the variations in building code usage can lead to exaggerated differences in property values. Contractors who do work anywhere in the state will be better position to do work everywhere in the state.

This bill would assist the state in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, as energy used in buildings accounts for 40%² of the total emissions generated in our state. This reduction has many long lasting and far reaching benefits, including:

- Less atmospheric pollution
- Improved public health
- Improved grid reliability
- Reduced weather pattern disruption
- Reduced urban heat island effect

Architects practicing in Colorado face the challenge of having to work with up to six different versions of the building energy code, each of which requires different construction technology and documentation. This inefficiency raises the cost of our work, which raises the cost for our clients. Reducing the number of energy codes to three will reduce this burden and bring architectural practice here more in alignment with other states.

AIA Colorado strongly supports HB19-1260 to improve the Colorado's buildings and reduce both long term energy costs and greenhouse gas emissions. Thank you.

1. Note: calculations are per the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory.
2. Colorado Greenhouse Gas Inventory—2014 Update Including Projections to 2020 & 2030