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**Environmental Advocacy Groups Call for**

**Stronger Building “Stretch” Code**

**Boston, MA –** Last week tenMassachusetts advocacy groups sent a [letter](https://www.sierraclub.org/sites/www.sierraclub.org/files/sce-authors/u1997/Stretch%20Code%20Letter%20to%20Secretary%20Beaton%2010.8.15.pdf) to Mass. Secretary of Energy and Environment Matthew A. Beaton calling for the draft stretch building code to be strengthened.

The original stretch code, adopted in 2009, was widely considered a success story for energy efficiency. It was designed to reduce energy use 30% and cut carbon emissions 40% compared to buildings built according to the base energy code. [Over 150](http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/doer/green-communities/grant-program/stretch-code-towns-adoption-by-community-map-and-list.pdf) Massachusetts cities and towns have adopted it.

“While the original stretch code was ambitious in its reach - cutting energy use 30% and carbon emissions 40% compared to buildings built according to the base energy code - this new draft is weak in comparison,” according to the [letter](https://www.sierraclub.org/sites/www.sierraclub.org/files/sce-authors/u1997/Stretch%20Code%20Letter%20to%20Secretary%20Beaton%2010.8.15.pdf) sent to Secretary Beaton. “The proposed commercial stretch code exempts buildings smaller than 100,000 square feet and only applies to new buildings - effectively excluding much of the commercial construction in the state. The residential code simply makes the voluntary 2015 IECC base code option of scoring a 55 or less on the HERS Index mandatory, so homes already using this option would not see any additional requirements.”

“When designed correctly, the stretch code can be an effective, efficient way to reduce energy use in the built environment,” noted Massachusetts Sierra Club Director Emily Norton. “It is not a mandate on anyone. We think this is the kind of approach to energy reduction that the Baker Administration should want to embrace.”

Building **codes** are regulations that provide minimum requirements for the design, construction, safety, and maintenance of buildings. Buildings in the Commonwealth account for over half of our state's greenhouse gas emissions - primarily from lighting, heating and cooling. As buildings can last 50-100 years, the way they are constructed has long-term impacts on their energy consumption.

**ABOUT Massachusetts Sierra Club**

Sierra Club is the nation's oldest and most effective grassroots environmental group. The Massachusetts Chapter was established nearly fifty years ago and has a strong track record of enabling Bay Staters to “enjoy, explore and protect the planet.”

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