

Southwest Energy Efficiency Project • Sierra Club • Environment New Mexico

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Overwhelming Support for Cost-saving Energy Conservation Code

Public opposes Martinez Administration's Scheme to Cost New Mexicans Money by Scrapping the 2009 NM Energy Conservation Code

ALBUQUERQUE, NM – New Mexico residents as well as many businesses in the construction industry came out in support of the cost-saving 2009 NM Energy Conservation Code (NMECC) at yesterday's public hearings held in Albuquerque, Las Cruces, Roswell, and Farmington. Concern over the lack of transparency was repeatedly cited as a major reason to oppose the Martinez Administration's proposal to scrap the 2009 NMECC.

"A transparent, one-year public process resulted in a common-sense, cost-effective Energy Conservation Code that is good for New Mexicans," said Tammy Fiebelkorn, New Mexico Representative for SWEEP. "We hope that the Construction Industries Commissioners heard the overwhelming demand for energy efficiency. New Mexicans deserve the cost savings and pollution reduction that will result from this code."

The 2009 NM Energy Conservation Code will help the state's residents and businesses save money on electric and gas bills by reducing their energy consumption by approximately 20 percent. According to the Southwest Energy Efficiency Project (SWEEP), the residential code will result in an average net savings of nearly \$14 per month (\$167 per year) for each homeowner, which adds up to \$66 million dollars saved over a ten year period throughout the state. The new codes will also improve property values for homeowners and lower barriers to homeownership for low-income New Mexicans.

"These codes will save New Mexicans money, slow climate change, and conserve the state's celebrated natural resources," said Shrayas Jatkar, local organizer with the Sierra Club. "We were thrilled to see such a strong turnout at the hearings today and hope the Commission listens to New Mexicans and rejects the rollback proposal."

The state's Construction Industries Commission is considering scrapping the New Mexico Energy Conservation Code that will end up costing businesses and residents a great deal of money, and result in increased pollution and reductions in green jobs.

Replacing the NM Energy Conservation Code with an international standard would result in a weaker and more generic building code for New Mexico, wiping out specific adaptations to the energy conservation code that take into account such New Mexico anomalies as Kiva fireplaces, passive solar

and adobe homes - not to mention stripping the code of appropriate climate zone allocations that ensure that insulation and other requirements align with our state's varied geographic and weather needs.

Scrapping the 2009 NM Energy Conservation Code at this point would likely cause confusion among many in the construction industry who have already begun adapting to and complying with the recently-adopted code. Thousands of code books have been printed and distributed to the public, code inspectors and builders have been trained and new software has been developed to help builders achieve energy savings in new construction. And if the Commission ultimately votes to roll back the building codes, it will cost additional taxpayer dollars to retrace all the steps taken to ensure implementation and enforcement of the duly-adopted building code.

“New Mexicans want the state to move forward and maintain the energy conservation code as adopted last year,” explained Sanders Moore with Environment New Mexico. “The energy-saving code represents a big step forward in decreasing energy use and reliance on dirty, fossil fuel sources of energy statewide said. This will mean less air pollution, decreased water use, fewer emissions that contribute to climate change, and a more sustainable future for all New Mexicans.”

Reduced power generation associated with energy efficiency measures will result in a decrease of a number of pollutants including carbon dioxide (a greenhouse gas), nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxide, mercury and other pollutants. This will reduce the public health impacts related to emissions of particulate matter and mercury, and also reduce our contribution to global climate change.

Background on the 2009 NM Energy Conservation Code:

<http://nmsierraclub.org/gov-hands-off-our-building-codes>



Sharon Gross, commercial property owner & Sierra Club member, speaks in support of energy-efficient buildings at the Albuquerque hearing

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