



Karl Eckhart
VP, State and Local Government Affairs
keckhart@nahb.org

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SUBMITTED VIA EMAIL

Sen. Jacob E. Bissaillon
Chair, Senate Committee on Housing & Municipal Government
Rhode Island General Assembly
State House Room 212
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Chairman Bissaillon and Members of the Senate Committee on Housing & Municipal Government:

On behalf of the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), I am providing the written testimony below in support of [Senate Bill S3032](#), one of the items scheduled for hearing and/or consideration on the [agenda for the Committee's public hearing](#) on Thursday, April 16, 2026.

NAHB is proud to recognize the Rhode Island Builders Association (RIBA) and its members as one of more than 700 affiliated state and local associations across the country. NAHB represents more than 140,000 members in all fifty states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico who design, construct, and supply single-family homes, build and manage multifamily projects, and remodel existing homes. In the single-family market, NAHB's members construct custom housing as well as homes for first-time home buyers, including low- and moderate-income families and individuals. NAHB's multifamily members build and manage rental housing for renters in market-rate, affordable, and federally assisted multifamily housing. Our members are proud to construct over 80 percent of the homes produced each year that provide shelter for this nation's families.

NAHB welcomes the opportunity to discuss the information on building code adoption around the country and the recent trends for a more measured pace of change. We have established a strong partnership with RIBA through the joint [development of a long-term education program](#) to train and prepare builders and other construction industry stakeholders to comply with the state's current code. We look forward to our continued support of RIBA and its members in their efforts to help the General Assembly find solutions to provide more Rhode Island households the American Dream of affordable home ownership.

Sincerely,

Karl J Eckhart

Karl Eckhart
Vice President, State and Local Government Affairs
National Association of Home Builders

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NAHB Testimony Before the Senate Committee on Housing and Municipal Government on [S3032](#)

While model code development organizations may publish new editions of their model building codes every three years, most states do not require review and/or adoption of new codes every three years. Many choose code adoption timelines significantly longer than three years – and nine home rule states do not even have mandatory statewide residential codes. In addition, many states amend model codes to moderate impacts on construction practices and disruption to the real estate market.

Recent trends in state and local policymaking show a number of jurisdictions – even those with extended histories of frequent and consistent building code updates – reconsidering the notion of the “traditional” three-year code cycle. Others attempted to adopt or did adopt significantly more stringent new codes, then later reversed course. Whether these changes are formally enacted into law or establish new *de facto* regulatory practices and expectations, these communities are hearing from stakeholders from across the design and construction industry urging them to rethink current practices and policies to respond to the ongoing housing affordability crisis and to address the unsustainable rate of regulatory changes imposed by the recent model codes.

Three states have acted in recent years to **pause future building code updates** for extended periods of time:

- **California:** Gov. Gavin Newsom [signed AB 130](#) in July 2025, prohibiting the state from adopting any changes to residential building codes (except to address emergencies like wildfire mitigation) through June 2031 and prevent local jurisdictions from amending their residential codes during this period. The law also allows production buildings and developers a 10-year period to use a model home approved under the requirements of the current code in effect when building homes with the same blueprints – giving a full decade to complete a development without having to navigate a code change between phases.
- **North Carolina:** In August 2023, the state legislature enacted [HB 488](#), creating separate code councils to adopt and amend the requirements for residential and nonresidential buildings. The bill established a six-year review cycle for the new Residential Code Council, with its first full revision to become effective in January 2031. The bill did authorize interim revisions to the energy, fuel gas, and mechanical portions of the code to proceed in 2025, though these were also later delayed by subsequent March 2025 legislation ([HB 47](#)) to become effective not before July 2026.
- **Hawaii:** In response to the [August 2023 Maui wildfires](#), Gov. Josh Green issued the first of a series of [Governor’s Proclamations Relating to Affordable Housing](#), which included the suspension of authority of the State Building Code Council (SBCC) to adopt or amend the [Hawaii State Building Codes](#) (currently based on the 2018 I-Codes developed by the International Code Council). Typically, under state law, if the SBCC does not adopt a model code within two years of its official publication date, that model code shall automatically become part of the state code until the SBCC adopts a superseding amended version. In 2025, Gov. Green issued an [additional proclamation](#) suspending the requirement for the state’s four counties to adopt the latest state building code update within two years. The state [currently intends](#) to completely skip the 2021 I-

Codes and begin review of the 2024 I-Codes by hiring two technical advisors to assist the SBCC to draft necessary amendments. This will streamline and simplify the adoption process for Hawaii's counties after the SBCC suspension is lifted.

Another neighboring state, Connecticut, is currently **considering legislation similar to S3032** that would pause future building code updates for six years:

- **Connecticut:** The state is expected to adopt the [2026 Connecticut State Building Code](#) based on the 2024 I-Codes (including the 2024 International Energy Conservation Code, or IECC) in July 2026, with an effective date of October 1, 2026. After this update, [H.B. 5401](#) would prohibit the State Building Inspector from adopting any new building standard (with exceptions for addressing imminent threats to public health or life safety and maintaining eligibility for federal funding such as disaster recovery grants) through October 1, 2032. The bill would also prohibit the state from updating its code more frequently than once every six years (two model code cycles). Recognizing the need to adequately prepare and train construction industry stakeholders (as Rhode Island has), the bill would also require the State Building Inspector to publish a projected schedule and anticipated effective date for each code update at least 18 months prior to said effective date. It would also establish a one-year implementation period beginning on the effective date to provide state-sponsored programs for training and code enforcement education. The state House unanimously (144-0) [approved](#) H.B. 5401 as amended on April 9. It awaits action in the Senate.

Three other jurisdictions took action to **reconsider residential code updates** that did or would have significantly increased the stringency of energy efficiency requirements:

- **Vermont:** In September 2025, Gov. Phil Scott issued an [executive order](#) from that governor reinstated the state's 2020 residential energy code edition and called for a review of the 2024 edition which had been in effect for over a year. The order also retroactively permitted projects commenced under the 2024 code to instead use the 2020 code.
- **Delaware:** In November 2025, the executive branch declined to approve its own proposed energy code update (which likely would have been the most stringent statewide code in the nation) set to take effect in December 2025. The state has begun the review process again.
- **Kansas City (Missouri):** After adopting the 2021 IECC unamended in October 2023, the significant cost impacts dramatically decreased construction activity. The city [did not issue one single-family permit](#) for the first three months under the new code, and the number of residential builders active in the city dropped by 78% in 2024. This February, the city council approved amendments to the code to address the least-cost effective requirements and to provide builders more cost-effective options.

Other states have **altered the process** for how the state will consider future code updates:

- **Indiana:** This year, the state legislature enacted [HEA 1003](#), which overhauls the responsibility of many state agencies, including the Fire Prevention and Building Safety Commission. The law will effectively freeze the state's residential code last updated in 2019 and require legislative approval for future proposed code updates.

Still more states employ ***de facto* building energy code adoption cycles longer than three years**, even if not required to do so by law:

- Example states that adopted the 2021 edition of the IECC that never adopted the 2018 edition:
 - Louisiana, Michigan (implementation has been delayed due to pending litigation), Wisconsin (commercial only)
- Example states that are considering the 2024 edition of the IECC that never adopted the 2021 edition:
 - Georgia, Hawaii
- States with current residential energy codes (as of January 2026) based on the 2018 IECC (or earlier editions):
 - Alabama, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, West Virginia
- Home rule states without mandatory statewide residential energy codes:
 - Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Kansas, Mississippi, Missouri, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming