

July 31, 2024

Members of the Kansas City Council
City Hall
414 E. 12th St.,
Kansas City, MO 64106

Dear Members of the Kansas City Council,

The City of Kansas City, Missouri is currently sacrificing homeownership for working parents and new homebuyers in order to serve a radical climate agenda. The building code adopted on October 13th, 2022, has led to detrimental effects for builders, businesses, and most importantly, for our shared constituents. If maintained, these regulations will strangle housing affordability and access.

As you all know, on October 13th, 2022, members of the City Council voted to adopt the 2021 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC), which are building standards contrived by the International Code Council. Adopting this code from an obscure internationalist group was a prerequisite to receive some of the combined \$400 million provided by the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). The updated code, which imposed greater requirements on builders, took effect in Kansas City on July 1st, 2023.¹

Implementing this code has led to a seismic decrease in construction. As your fellow Councilman Wes Rogers stated, the city typically issues eighty-five permits to build single-family homes per month.² Now, after Kansas City's adoption of the IECC, the city issued only nine in the entire first quarter of 2024. From February 2023 to February 2024, single-family home construction permits in Kansas City, Missouri decreased by 74%—while those in the surrounding Kansas City metro actually increased by 179%.³ This difference is stark and telling. While Kansas City should be increasing housing options like its surrounding areas, the asinine quest you all have embarked on will leave our constituents with less housing access. Kansas Citians should not be subject to unnecessary burdens, which regulate homes down to their selection of lighting controls.⁴

Meanwhile, housing prices are already soaring. Kansas City homes were already suffering from a supply shortage.⁵ Yet recent studies even found that IECC compliance could add as much as \$30,000 in additional

¹ Wes Rogers, *Ordinance 240434*, Kansas City Office of City Clerk, Apr. 25, 2024,

<https://kansascity.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=6647679&GUID=BB0486F7-94D8-41A1-9CF8-633FE075DB0F&FullText=1>

² Andy Alcock, *Kansas City, Missouri permit change impacts new builds in city limits*, KMBC 9, Apr. 26, 2024,

<https://www.kmbc.com/article/kansas-city-missouri-permit-change-impacts-new-builds/60621965>

³ *Id.*

⁴ *2021 IECC Implementation KCMO Presentation*, KCMO, <https://www.kcmo.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/11276/638279739181300000>

⁵ Mid-America Regional Council, *Housing Production in the Kansas City region continues to lag peer metros*, MARC, Jun. 25, 2024,

<https://www.marc.org/news/economy-housing/housing-production-kansas-city-region-continues-lag-peer-metros#:~:text=Nearly%2064%2C000%20households%20in%20the,cannot%20close%20the%20underbuilding%20gap.>

United States Senate

cost to the construction of a building.⁶ Builders aren't working, residents are forced to turn to an already shallow pool of existing buildings, and homes in Kansas City, Missouri are drifting further away from affordability. These effects—which are keeping Kansas Citians from owning their own homes and building equity—are the direct result of the Kansas City Council's misguided actions.

Focusing on the mythical climate goals of the Biden Administration rather than worrying about real issues presently affecting the people of Kansas City is contrary to the interests you all are supposed to be serving as public officials. I recently cosponsored the HOUSE Act, which would repeal the rulemakings that Federal agencies like the Department of Housing and Urban Development have proposed related to expanding these energy codes and making America's housing supply worse off. I am doing my part to fight for cost-effective housing; you should do yours. If this council truly wishes to fulfill its duty to act in the best interests of all citizens, I urge you to revoke these updates.

Sincerely,



Eric S. Schmitt
United States Senator

⁶ Mili Mansaray, *Kansas City homeowners don't want to sell. It's making the housing shortage worse*, KCUR, Apr. 14, 2024, <https://www.kcur.org/housing-development-section/2024-04-14/kansas-city-homeowners-dont-want-to-sell-its-making-the-housing-shortage-worse>