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**Urgent: Reverse Ordinance 640144**

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From Beth Pauley <bethpauley3@gmail.com>

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To cc 1 <cc1@kcmo.org>

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Mayor Lucas, Mayor Pro-Tem Parks-Shaw, and Members of City Council,

As a former member of the Climate Protection Steering Committee, I urge you to reverse ordinance 260144. Mayor Quinton Lucas, please defend your honorable affordable housing legacy, including your consistent support of updated energy codes that promote housing affordability, and veto ordinance 260144. Councilmembers, I urge you to support the Mayor's veto. The most significant benefit of updated energy codes is lowering utility costs. **In this economy, policies that lower utility costs are a no brainer.**

I applaud Councilwoman Bough in her leadership on energy codes throughout her tenure. I thank Mayor Lucas, Councilwoman Robinson, Councilwoman French, Councilman Duncan, and Councilman Bunch for opposing ordinance 260144 and consistently supporting updated energy codes. I also appreciate that Councilman O'Neill defended Councilwoman Bough's rigorous stakeholder engagement efforts despite his different perspective on the issue.

Councilman O'Neill, I implore you to reconsider your vote. Additionally, I ask Mayor Pro-Tem Parks Shaw, Councilwoman Patterson Hazley, Councilman Curls, Councilman Rodgers, Councilman Willett, and Councilman Rea to reverse your vote and uphold the Mayor's veto.

Regarding preemption, [\*\*energy efficiency and policies that lower utility bills does not have a political home.\*\*](#) I worked in statewide clean energy organizing while overseeing the energy section of the climate plan. The champions on clean energy affordability in the Kansas legislature included ideological republicans, moderates,

and democrats. Our stakeholders and citizen coalition included libertarians, socialists, anarchists, Independents, democratic voters, republican voters, nonvoters, and sometimes voters.

Nobody likes paying high utility bills. Many people cannot afford to. In the worst case scenarios, folks face evictions, foreclosures, or are bargaining with various government assistance programs to determine which bills can wait, which bills need to be paid to prevent them from losing their homes. [FlatlandKC featured the consequences of rising utility costs during the pandemic.](#) Your constituents are still struggling to pay utility bills. Energy costs continue to rise and extreme weather exacerbates already high energy costs.

When we developed the climate plan, we prioritized energy justice to ensure the policies benefit folks who are first and worst impacted by high energy costs. In addition to citizen engagement, we incorporated research from esteemed energy justice scholars such as [Shalanda Baker](#) and [Tony Reames](#) who served in the Biden administration's Department of Energy Justice and Equity.

Some clean energy issues are complicated and require thorough examination to ensure everyone, especially marginalized communities who have systematically been excluded from clean energy access, benefit from clean energy policies.

Updated energy codes, however, are straightforward in promoting energy affordability. My former colleague, [S. Mosen Fatemi](#) who studied energy justice under Dr. Reames, offered the following perspective on ordinance 260144:

*"As someone who spends days and nights researching these issues, I find the justification for Ordinance 260144 to be deeply flawed. The argument that repealing these codes aids "affordability" is a massive contradiction. We cannot claim to solve the housing crisis by building homes that lock future residents into a cycle of energy poverty. With energy rates in our region already skyrocketing—and projected to rise even further—the "first-cost" savings for developers pale in comparison to the devastating financial loss vulnerable community members will face through decades of high utility bills.*

*True affordability must account for the total cost of living, not just the purchase price. Weakening these standards isn't a cost-saving measure; it's a cost-shifting measure that burdens the very folks "impacted first and worst" by the climate crisis.*

*Research from the DOE and HUD consistently shows that the 2021 IECC standards represent a marginal increase of only 1% to 2.2% in total construction costs. However, that small upfront investment generates a staggering 25% to 35% reduction in annual energy bills for the life of the home. When looking at the total cost of ownership, the net savings for a Missouri homeowner over a 30-year mortgage is estimated at over \$13,000 to \$15,000 after accounting for financing.*

*In an environment where residential electricity rates have outpaced inflation—rising 36% nationally since 2020, with Evergy Missouri West seeing a 13.99% hike this year alone—energy efficiency is a critical economic defense for Kansas City families. For many residents, a "cheap" house that is expensive to heat and cool is not actually affordable; it is a financial trap.*

*Rolling back these codes ignores the reality that utility burdens are a primary driver of housing instability. We must prioritize "energy justice" by ensuring our building standards protect the resident's pocketbook for the long haul, rather than just the developer's margins today."*

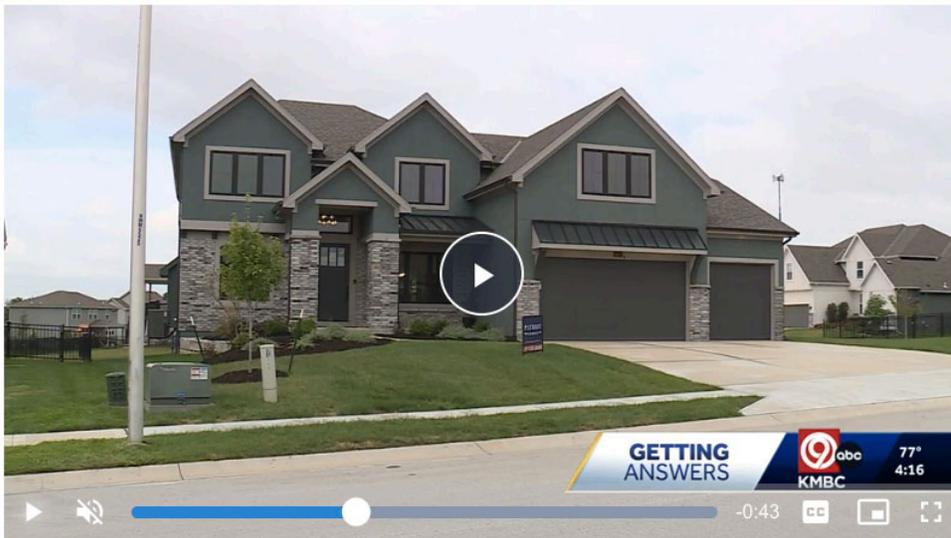
Indeed, I am sure the Home Builders Association is active in Jefferson City, much like they are active at the federal level and at city hall. Their campaign to roll back energy codes was not a secret:

[July:](#) National Association of Home Builders Endorse President Trump's Big Beautiful Bill

[August:](#) KC Home Builders Association launch campaign to let builders build campaign

[September:](#) KCHBA testifies to congress to roll back energy codes

## Kansas City homebuilder testifies before Congress, shares local challenges of energy codes



October-January: Local media amplifies this campaign

February: City Council passed ordinance 260144 to weaken energy codes through a hasty process with no public input

I wholeheartedly echo Councilwoman Bough's sentiment that I do not want to be spending my time urging this governing body to take action that has been deliberated extensively, and uphold past decisions aligned with independent researchers and the will of Kansas Citians.

The home builders association opposes energy codes. I would be shocked if an inclusive stakeholder engagement process that includes residents came to a different conclusion than Councilwoman Bough's.

Lastly, I am quite dismayed by the confusing and hasty way this ordinance was passed. With very little discussion, the city council erased years of hard work against the will of Kansas Citians while undermining the fundamental tenets of good governance and transparency.

Please reverse Ordinance 640144 and give Kansas Citians reasonable notice to engage with these important issues.

Sincerely,

Beth Pauley

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