

Email Comment re. Ordinance #220364: Proposed Amendment - Adopt 2021 IECC With Decarbonization Overlay to Meet Community Needs and Act on Climate

Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Bough, Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on proposed Ordinance #220364. To help ensure Kansas City protects the health and well-being of all residents for years to come, we write to you as Kansas City residents and members of community organizations to ask that the committee adopt an amended version of Ordinance 220364 to ensure the Council adopts the unamended 2021 International Energy Efficiency Code with a Zero-Code Appendix and Decarbonization Overlay. A proposed revision of the ordinance achieving this is attached for your consideration.

As you know, residents from across the city of Kansas City, MO and the metro area have repeatedly called upon the City Council to take bold action to decarbonize our built environment and adopt strategies that will protect the health, both physical and financial, of their families, friends and neighbors while ensuring that our community is protected against impacts of climate change. This happened most recently on May 25 at a special hearing on building codes hosted by the Council where 24 people expressed the need for strong codes that address the climate crisis, 23 of whom explicitly called on the council to adopt the 2021 IECC with no weakening amendments to ensure the city seize this opportunity to advance its climate action goals.¹ Adopting the 2021 IECC with a decarbonization overlay² achieves just that.

The merits of the 2021 IECC and the need to evaluate and adopt it have been raised at numerous public meetings of the Kansas City Environmental Management Commission and the Climate Protection Plan Steering Committee over the last two years. Further, building codes are a critical component of local actions that reduce bills for residents while tackling climate change, and other government entities are mobilizing resources to support cities like Kansas City who take action.³ As decisions about buildings impact the built environment for decades to come, this is an opportunity for Kansas City to lead the region that will support the health and well-being of Kansas Citians now and in the future.

¹ In the forthcoming final draft of the Kansas City Climate Protection & Resiliency Plan, not yet publicly available but shared with the City Council, adopting strong building codes is identified as a critical priority for the short term to achieve Kansas City's goal of becoming climate neutral by 2040 and protecting residents.

² New Buildings Institute, Building Decarbonization Code (Accessed June 3, 2022), <https://newbuildings.org/resource/building-decarbonization-code/#:~:text=The%20Building%20Decarbonization%20Code%20is.now%20compatible%20with%20ASHRAE%2090.1>.

³ The White House, *FACT SHEET: Biden-Harris Administration Launches Initiative to Modernize Building Codes* Press Release (June 1, 2022), Improve Climate Resilience, and Reduce Energy Costs, available at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/06/01/fact-sheet-biden-harris-administration-launches-initiative-to-modernize-building-codes-improve-climate-resilience-and-reduce-energy-costs/>.

In addition to supporting healthy homes and climate action,⁴ adopting the 2021 IECC as amended will protect the financial health of residents by helping lower utility bills as a result of vastly increased energy efficiency. Studies have repeatedly shown that the 2021 IECC will support lowering costs,⁵ and many jurisdictions in the nation are taking advantage of this benefit by adopting unamended or strengthened versions of the 2021 IECC.⁶ As Kansas Citians face some of the highest energy bills proportionate to income in the country,⁷ the Council must enact strong energy codes now for new buildings. Doing so would have great benefit in the long term and have only minor impacts on the short term as new buildings account for a small portion of home sales.⁸ This is critical for ensuring we conserve energy to avoid higher bills impacting residents and businesses in Kansas City.

Kansas City has been leading in climate action and over the last few years has taken major steps to lead the way in building thriving communities and enacting policies that protect its people—including zero-fare transit, a tenants’ right to counsel, and a visionary climate plan, to name just a few. This is Kansas City’s moment to lead once again in responding to community needs and centering human health and well-being. The community is behind you and will work across the city and metropolitan region to ensure the code is implemented and that we continue to build a healthier, more resilient, and thriving Kansas City.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joyce Raybuck	Jeremy Knoll
Frank Zilm	Eslun Tucker
Don Wallace	James Baker
Billy Davies	

cc: City Council
Mayor Quinton Lucas
Brian Platt
Jeff Williams
Jeff Lee
Andy Savastino

Enclosures: Ord. 220364, Amended
KCMO Needs Strong Codes
Slide Deck 1: IECC 2021 Impacts
Slide Deck 2: Achieve Climate Goals
Organizational Support Flyer

⁴ See attachment, KCMO Needs Strong Codes_Support 2021 IECC.

⁵ Victor R. Salcido et al., Cost effectiveness of the 2021 IECC for Residential Buildings in Missouri, US Dept. of Energy Report (2021), available at https://www.energycodes.gov/sites/default/files/2021-07/MissouriResidentialCostEffectiveness_2021_0.pdf; see also ICF, Checking the Math of NAHB on Residential Provisions of the 2021 IECC, Report (2022) <https://energyefficientcodes.org/wp-content/uploads/ICF-2021-IECC-Cost-effectiveness-Analysis.pdf>.

⁶ The cities of Austin, TX, and Louisville, KY, as well as the state of Colorado, have all adopted the IECC 2021 with no amendments or strengthening amendments.

⁷ American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy, *Report: “Energy Burden” on Low-Income, African American, & Latino Households up to Three Times as High as Other Homes, More Energy Efficiency Needed*, Press Release (April 20, 2016), [https://www.aceee.org/press/2016/04/report-energy-burden-low-income#:~:text=Energy%20burdens%20were%20found%20to.%2C%20Philadelphia%20\(8.8%20percent\)%2C](https://www.aceee.org/press/2016/04/report-energy-burden-low-income#:~:text=Energy%20burdens%20were%20found%20to.%2C%20Philadelphia%20(8.8%20percent)%2C).

⁸ See Attachment, Slide Deck 1.