



EESI Strongly Supports Energy Efficient Building Codes Amendment

March 5, 2020—“Senators Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) and Joe Manchin (D-WV) introduced the [American Energy Innovation Act](#) (S. 2657) this week, and it’s a big deal,” said **EESI Executive Director Daniel Bresette**. “But **it’s missing a critical component: building energy code provisions.**”

“The last time there was serious consideration of energy legislation, four years ago, 85 senators voted in favor of a bill that included as its very first section, ‘Greater energy efficiency in building codes.’ Unfortunately, the bill currently before the Senate lacks the building energy code provisions introduced on a bipartisan basis by Sens. Rob Portman (R-Ohio) and Jeanne Shaheen (D-N.H). That means that homeowners will miss out on lower utility bills every month for as long as the house stands. And from a climate perspective, absent the building energy codes provisions, the emissions reductions potential of the Senate energy bill is severely and unacceptably limited.”

“The significant emission reduction benefits of improved building energy codes have not changed much. But the urgency of climate change is even greater now. **As the Senate moves ahead with energy legislation this week, its first vote should be to restore the missing building energy codes provisions, which are our best chance to realize significant climate benefits this year.**”

The proposed amendment ([S. Amdt. 1514](#)) would add Sections 101 and 102 of the [Energy Savings and Industrial Competitiveness Act of 2019](#) (S. 2137 or “Portman-Shaheen”) to the *American Energy Innovation Act*. These provisions would direct the Department of Energy (DOE) to **develop energy savings targets for building energy codes** with extensive input from state and local authorities as well as building code developers. Grants and technical assistance would also enable DOE to **help states, communities and home builders with cost effective code adoption, enforcement, and compliance**. The adoption of more energy efficient building codes would remain entirely voluntary, at the discretion of state, tribal, and local governments.

In a recent analysis of Portman-Shaheen (and its identical House counterpart, [H.R. 3962](#), introduced by Reps. Peter Welch (D-Vt.) and David McKinley (R-W.Va.)), the American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy (ACEEE) estimates the bill would **save more than \$41 billion through 2050 and reduce carbon emissions by 1.1 billion metric tons, with most of the savings resulting from the building energy codes provisions**. Adopting these provisions would help reduce emissions from the building sector, which currently accounts for nearly 40 percent of total U.S. energy consumption and related greenhouse gas emissions.

Energy efficiency also makes homes more affordable, month after month, by reducing energy bills that are typically a household’s largest expense after the mortgage payment. Moreover, houses and buildings built to the latest model codes are safer and more comfortable than their less efficient counterparts.

The *American Energy Innovation Act* would accelerate R&D and deployment of renewable energy, energy storage technologies, grid modernization (including microgrids), and other innovative solutions to climate change. But it could do so much more by embracing more energy efficient building codes. In [October testimony](#) to the U.S. Senate Energy Committee, EESI Executive Director Daniel Bresette noted that “**energy efficiency provides the easiest source of measurable emissions reductions. It is the secret weapon against climate change because we already have what we need to do.** Every kilowatt and kilowatt-hour saved today will make future commitments easier to attain.”

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Resource:

[EESI Executive Director Daniel Bresette Testimony to the U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, October 22 Hearing on Energy Efficiency Efforts in the United States and Internationally.](#)

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