



Montana

Department of Labor and Industry

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Montana Among First Six States Adopting the 2009 *International Energy Conservation Code*

(Helena) In concert with Montanan's emphasis on developing *clean and green* energy resources and practices, the Department of Labor and Industry has adopted an updated statewide energy code. The *International Energy Conservation Code* (IECC) mandates that all new houses in Montana meet minimum requirements of the code, including amendments specific to Montana. "This progressive approach allows our citizens to capture benefits of the energy-saving standards which result in continued returns", said Labor Commissioner Keith Kelly.

The effective date of the adoption is March 26, with local jurisdictions having an additional 90-day period to incorporate the new standards.

Increased energy conservation in the building process has many positive, long-range effects. Dollars are returned directly to consumers, repeatedly, over the life of the structure. According to data from the Department of Energy the 2009 IECC, as published, will produce approximately 15% to 18% in energy efficiency gains compared to the 2006 edition; translating into immediate savings on the homeowner's energy bill. Currently the average gas bill is around \$95 a month; this efficiency's will save between \$168 and \$276 a year for the average household. Additional conservation provisions involving mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems will also produce monthly savings in electric and water utility costs. Resources not spent on energy can go elsewhere in a consumer's budget leading to a positive economic outcome. Second, energy conservation is often referred to as the "other" type of energy generation since it produces savings in energy that replace that which would have been generated to meet demand. This "generation" savings could be the very thing necessary to make *clean and green* energy generation more attractive and viable to generating companies.

The Department hosted several public meetings and encouraged participation and subject matter from experts and the public. "We welcomed the balance of ideas that came from this transparent and effective process", said Building Codes Bureau Chief, David Cook. "The culmination was an energy code proposal presented to the Building Codes Council that was well vetted, sound and a good measure of progressive energy standards with consideration for construction costs and other economic factors."

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Specific changes with the new Montana energy code include:

- Modest increase in wall and ceiling R-value of insulation
- Windows need to be more efficient to protect against heat loss
- At least one-half of the permanent light fixtures must have high efficiency light bulbs
- Heating system ductwork located outside of the conditioned (heated) part of the house must be tested for tightness
- Programmable/setback thermostats are required in homes with furnaces

The changes also include the requirement that basement walls be insulated to prevent the loss of energy through those walls, a stipulation that had a mixed reaction to the cost benefit of the regulation's requirement. Based on a study embraced by the Building Codes Council a nearly \$300 per year energy savings after spending the modest amount to insulate the basement walls can be realized if the basement space remains unconditioned. If the insulated space is to be occupied and conditioned (heated), then that savings more than doubles. "As energy costs continue to rise, it is imperative that we look at all the ways we as consumers can save on those costs. Insulating basement walls is just one of the many ways we can do that, while it may increase the cost of the build, that cost can be offset and is really an investment that will show returns for anyone who owns that home", said Commissioner Kelly.

The statewide energy code also gives prospective house buyers an additional tool to use in making their purchase decision—the "Energy Efficiency Components Label." This label is required in all new houses and is the way for the builder to inform the house buyer of the insulation levels, heating system efficiencies and other energy features of a new house. The label should be permanently affixed to the house's electrical breaker box, so subsequent owners will have the same information available to them.

The department pledges to continue to cooperate with the Building Codes Council, energy code stakeholders, and other interested parties in an open, collaborative effort to further develop building and energy codes that meet the objectives of the state building code.

The *International Energy Conservation Code* is adopted in 42 states and Washington, D.C. however Montana is one of the first six states to adopt the 2009 edition of the IECC.

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