March 2025

New Jersey Zero Energy Building Roadmap Draft and New Jersey Energy Code Collaborative

Fact Sheet

This Fact Sheet document compiles questions and comments received following the release of the NJ Zero Energy Building (NJ ZEB) Roadmap Draft in January 2025, and the convening of the New Jersey Energy Code Collaborative (NJ ECC). It includes:

- Questions submitted via email after the meeting
- Questions from the chat during the meeting that were not addressed live

Responses are intended to provide clarity and support ongoing discussions. If any updates or additional input are needed, please contact the Project Facilitators: Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnerships (NEEP) and the Rutgers, Built Environment and Green Building Group.

1. What is the goal of this group?

   The goal of this group is to establish a timely and robust, stakeholder-guided process to research and develop a New Jersey Zero Energy Building Roadmap that provides options to build government and market capacities to effectively advance an increasingly more energy-efficient building energy code and improve administration, enforcement and compliance, aligned with relevant clean energy policies of the State, including the Energy Master Plan goals and recommendations. Please see the history of this effort here.

2. What is the funding source(s) for this initiative?
   This initiative is funded by the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (BPU) through the NEEP state partnership with New Jersey.

3. Can NEEP list out the current definitions and processes for the following for the collaborative:

- IECC - stretch code
- IgCC green building code
- NJ Green building manual
- Passive House
- Zero Energy Homes (or net zero homes) and
- Zero Energy Ready Homes

These all are alternatives to the energy building code and can be incentives through the municipalities to suggest to builder to build above code

- *International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) - Stretch Code*

A stretch code is a voluntary or mandatory energy code adopted by jurisdictions to achieve higher energy efficiency standards than the state base code. New Jersey is exploring the development of a statewide voluntary stretch code through the Energy Code Collaborative, as outlined in the NJ ZEB Roadmap Draft. This code would provide an option for municipalities to encourage or require more energy-efficient construction beyond the minimum state code.

- *International Green Construction Code (IgCC)*
  The IgCC is a model code developed by the International Code Council (ICC) to promote sustainable building practices, including energy efficiency, water conservation, and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reductions. It is designed for commercial buildings, and some states adopt it alongside the IECC and ASHRAE 90.1 to support state and local climate policies.
- *NJ Green Building Manual*
  The New Jersey Green Building Manual (NJGBM) is a resource tailored for New Jersey that provides economic and environmental best practices across the spectrum of green building categories including energy, emissions, water, waste, siting, transportation, and human health. The Manual comprises Commercial and Residential sections with best practices strategies applicable to new and existing buildings.
- *Passive House*
  Passive House design is based on the Passive House Institute (PHI) or Passive House Institute U.S. (PHIUS) standards, which emphasize airtight construction, super-insulation, high-performance windows, and mechanical ventilation with heat recovery. Passive House buildings significantly reduce energy demand for heating and cooling, making them an effective strategy for achieving high-performance, low-energy buildings.
- *Zero Energy Homes (Net Zero Homes)*
  Zero Energy Homes, also known as Net Zero Homes, are designed and built to be highly energy-efficient and produce as much renewable energy on-site as they consume annually. These homes typically achieve energy balance through a combination of advanced insulation, high-efficiency heating and cooling systems, and on-site solar energy generation.
- *Zero Energy Ready Homes*
  Zero Energy Ready Homes (ZERH) are homes that meet rigorous energy efficiency criteria and are designed to be easily upgraded to full Zero Energy status with the addition of renewable energy systems. These homes comply with the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Zero Energy Ready Home Program and exceed conventional energy code requirements.

4. Does NJ adopt the model code for new construction and existing buildings, and what are the associated statutory requirements?

Below is the language from the NJ UCC Act:

The energy subcode shall be based upon the model codes cited under this subsection or the International Energy Conservation Code. (N.J. Stat. § 52:27D-123, also see NJ ZEB Roadmap, page 3)

In developing the [rehabilitation] code, the commissioner is directed to investigate any model codes, such as Chapter 34, "Existing Structures," of the "BOCA National Building Code/1993" and experiences of other code enforcement jurisdictions, to consult with individuals and organizations experienced in the rehabilitation of low and moderate-income housing in New Jersey's urban areas, and conduct research as may be relevant to the purposes of this act. (N.J. Stat. § 52:27D-123.8, also see NJ ZEB Roadmap, page 5 and 6)