



New Jersey Energy Code Collaborative
Existing Buildings and Retrofits Subcommittee
Meeting Minutes

August 13, 2025, 1:00 – 2:00 PM

Attendees

- Abigail Andrews, Rutgers
- Arah Schuur, Rutgers CUPR
- Cornelia Wu, NEEP
- David Hattis, Rutgers
- Dragana Thibault, NEEP
- Eric DeGesero, EDGE Consulting
- Emily DeHart, New Jersey Natural Gas
- Julianna Rivera, Rutgers
- Jason Kliwinski, Senior Energy Code Researcher for Rutgers
- Jeff Kolakowski, NJBA
- Jennifer Senick, Rutgers
- Jennifer Souder, Rutgers
- Jerry Flach, Rutgers
- Kiran Ghosh, Rutgers
- Kyle Cruz, NJHMFA
- Melissa Miles, NJEJA
- Nicole Miller, MMM Consulting
- Nicholas Kikis, NJ Apartment Association
- Pam DeLosSantos, NJHMFA
- Robert Austin, NJDCA
- Roger Marran, Energy Kinetics
- Stacy Richardson, NJBPU
- Taylor Sizemore, TRC
- Yousaf Shahid, Rutgers

1. Introduction

Jason Kliwinski (Senior Energy Code Researcher for Rutgers) welcomed everyone, introduced the core team, and asked attendees to add names and affiliations in the chat. Reminded the group that the Energy Code Collaborative website hosts past meeting transcripts and slide decks. Noted earlier transcripts had been circulated for comment and updated. Said the group would review what was heard last time and discuss next steps. Gave a brief antitrust reminder. Handed to DCA to talk about energy parts of the Rehab Subcode.

2. Rehab Subcode

Rob Austin (NJDCA) provided an overview of New Jersey’s Rehabilitation Subcode. Said NJ does not adopt the International Existing Building Code and developed its own approach in the late 1990s. Explained the work categories repair, renovation, alteration, and reconstruction. Noted materials-and-methods sections also apply based on scope. Pointed to sections 6.5–6.7 for general rehab and 6.8 for energy links to the IECC or IRC Chapter 11 for residential and to ASHRAE for commercial. Said change of use alone typically doesn’t trigger energy work—it depends on what’s physically done. Said additions must comply with new construction energy



standards with limited exceptions. Emphasized most triggers relate to the building thermal envelope. Described “new building elements” equipment, controls, insulation must meet new code. Said the rehab code has accumulated content since 1998 and needs cleanup; they’ll work on it as time allows.

Jason Kliwinski (Senior Energy Code Researcher for Rutgers) invited questions.

3. Discussion

Jennifer Senick (Rutgers) asked if DCA would develop training to familiarize users with the restructuring.

Robert Austin (NJ DCA) clarified restructuring keeps content in the same places (the “E” subsections) but adds clearer headings and pointers (e.g., building list, energy list). Pointed to section 6.9 New Building Elements as the example of the intended format; goal is improved user-friendliness.

Jennifer Senick (Rutgers) broadened the question to training on energy as related to the Rehab Subcode and IECC for anyone designing, constructing, or reviewing.

Robert Austin (NJ DCA) said CEUs depend on each official’s license area. Added that in higher education there’s little construction-code training including energy and suggested more code-related coursework for design professionals and trades so first-time submissions/installations are correct, with code officials serving as check-and-balance. Agreed training for all parties is important and said DCA supports more training.

Eric DeGesero (EDGE Consulting) sought clarification whether new construction mean new construction under the rehab code or general IECC? Also asked about change of use versus additions.

Robert Austin (NJ DCA) clarified that additions must meet new-construction standards; that was his point.

Jason Kliwinski (Senior Energy Code Researcher for Rutgers) thanked Rob and handed it to Jen Souder for a BPS update.

Jen Souder (Rutgers) provided an update on a project under a BPU contract funded by DOE’s RECI grant, with Rutgers and NJIT, plus an advisory committee and community partners, preparing the market for incentivized, evidence-based building performance standards.

Said the project explores methods to improve energy performance in existing buildings and the technical assistance, training, workshops, and incentives owners will need. Mentioned a lead-by-example pilot focused on public-serving buildings led by NJIT. Said work includes policy



research, modeling, and analysis with ongoing stakeholder engagement to produce a NJ playbook replicable for other jurisdictions.

Jason Kliwinski (Senior Energy Code Researcher for Rutgers) framed the importance of existing buildings, since most buildings that will exist in 50 years are already built. Recapped prior meeting themes: (1) incentive program coordination—utility-managed incentives vary, distinctions between new construction vs existing building incentives can be unclear (e.g., gut renovations), and complexity may limit uptake in sectors like multifamily; and (2) regulatory alignment—the rehab code by nature limits upgrades to what’s touched, and existing-building incentives should align better with rehab-code project types so it’s clear which incentives apply.

Described action item to create a comprehensive incentive matrix (Rutgers, BPU, utilities, and this subcommittee). Objective is to map programs across utilities/BPU/EDA, identify gaps and overlaps, and test reasonable stacking scenarios; said an initial draft has 100+ entries. Invited feedback.

Jen Souder (Rutgers) relayed a chat question from Melissa asking about a timeline for a draft/publication.

Jason Kliwinski (Senior Energy Code Researcher for Rutgers) said no firm publication date yet; multiple efforts are being coordinated, and something should be available in the near future.

Described action item to align program offerings across state agencies and encourage greater uniformity among utility programs (BPU and utilities). Objective is standardized incentive structures and eligibility criteria. Next steps include aligning clean-energy incentives with rehab-code definitions, creating a decision tree to help customers understand which code/incentives apply, and reviewing offerings for opportunities to align and stack incentives. Asked for comments.

Pam DeLosSantos (HMFA) flagged coordination issues when incentive program versions change and during grandfathering/transition periods, citing DOE Zero Energy Ready Homes as a current pain point where projects designed to a prior version are hit with significant cost increases if permitting slips.

Jason Kliwinski (Senior Energy Code Researcher for Rutgers) acknowledged programs change frequently; state and federal timelines differ.

Jennifer Senick (Rutgers) asked if Pam meant DOE version changes versus utility/CEP changes.

Pam DeLosSantos (HMFA) answered DOE. Explained projects sometimes miss permit timing and aren’t grandfathered even though designed to the prior version.



Jason Kliwinski (Senior Energy Code Researcher for Rutgers) noted that locking versions typically occurs at permit issuance. Said federal versioning issues are larger than this committee can solve, but feedback should be elevated.

Jennifer Senick (Rutgers) noted NJ's new construction program may also be affected if ZERH is an alternative compliance pathway.

Jason Kliwinski (Senior Energy Code Researcher for Rutgers) agreed state programs are affected by federal changes.

Nicole Miller (MMM Consulting) supported aligning offerings and the decision tree but asked how tools would be differentiated for customers with varying resources, capacity and access. Pointed out single-family homeowners often rely on installers to know incentives; asked about intervention points so contractors or homeowners unfamiliar with programs still get connected.

Jason Kliwinski (Senior Energy Code Researcher for Rutgers) acknowledged awareness gaps among contractors and homeowners. Said utilities' outreach and trade-ally networks are key, but if a homeowner's contractor isn't a trade ally, connecting to incentives is difficult.

Nicole Miller (MMM Consulting) added that there is a knowledge gap among some contractors who still discourage electrification, citing community anecdotes; said technology education is needed statewide.

Jason Kliwinski (Senior Energy Code Researcher for Rutgers) agreed and noted the topic ties to later action items on education and awareness.

Introduced a proposed working group focused on multifamily housing, based on perceived incentive gaps in that market. Responsible parties: Rutgers and this committee. Objectives: identify and fill gaps; actions: review current programs, coordinate presentations on current incentives, and develop recommendations. Invited sign-ups via Padlet [link](#).

Proposed another working group to consider cost-effective energy-efficiency amendments to the rehab code. Objective: strengthen energy efficiency requirements and clarify requirements by project type. Actions: review the rehab code and references for opportunities and develop potential recommendations for amendments/clarifications; DCA's presentation today provides baseline context. Invited sign-ups via Padlet [link](#).

David Hattis (Rutgers) noted both IECC Chapter 5 and NJ's rehab subcode limit efficiency upgrades to the elements being worked on; there are no triggers for broader upgrades outside the work area. Suggested considering a gut rehab amendment whereby very extensive reconstruction would trigger full energy-code compliance. Said current supplemental requirements in reconstruction are triggered at 50% of building area for life safety items; 50% is not gut rehab, so a higher threshold, for example 80%, could be considered to trigger full



compliance. Said the occupancy-specific reconstruction chapters hold the supplemental triggers; that's where energy-related supplemental requirements could be added.

Robert Austin (NJ DCA) asked where the 50% threshold appears and noted those supplemental triggers address life safety rather than energy. Expressed skepticism about applying that framework directly to energy, but acknowledged it applies to reconstruction.

Jennifer Senick (Rutgers) suggested this detailed policy design belongs in the working group and would improve shared understanding.

Jason Kliwinski (Senior Energy Code Researcher for Rutgers) reiterated the rehab code's intent to limit upgrades to the scope of work to avoid undue burden on existing owners; scope can vary widely project to project.

Jennifer Senick (Rutgers) noted useful chat comments from Nicole about direct contractor outreach at places like Home Depot, Lowe's, and supply houses and partnering with community-based organizations; said those ideas should be documented and shared.

Jason Kliwinski (Senior Energy Code Researcher for Rutgers) asked about working-group cadence and frequency; invited suggestions.

Nicholas Kikis (NJAA) suggested cadence be left to each working group based on scope. Broadened the discussion to note a mismatch between bold private-sector obligations envisioned and relatively modest government actions. Argued for greater governmental "skin in the game," stronger incentives, and coordinated capacity, citing models like Mass Save to avoid adverse impacts on priorities like housing affordability. Warned that raising base code makes above-code performance incrementally more expensive and that incentives tend to fall away once measures are mandated; urged balancing mandates and incentives and building private-sector capacity.

Jason Kliwinski (Senior Energy Code Researcher for Rutgers) suggested the incentive matrix may serve to identify whether incentive dollars are adequate and where gaps exist, especially for the multifamily group to examine. Said incentives are intended to drive market transformation, not be permanent; as markets mature, costs should decline and practices become standard, but acknowledged the need for balance.

Nicole Miller (MMM Consulting) urged ensuring incentives reach low- and moderate-income households and environmental-justice areas, noting past solar incentives skewed to those with more capacity to participate.

Jason Kliwinski (Senior Energy Code Researcher for Rutgers) noted many utility weatherization programs are income-restricted and agreed that targeting where need is greatest is important for the multifamily work.



David Hattis (Rutgers) added that if future BPS mandates require upgrades to certain building categories, NJ should review interactions with the rehab subcode to avoid BPS-driven work unintentionally triggering extra rehab-code requirements that add cost; amendments may be needed.

Nicole Miller (MMM Consulting) responded that mandates should ensure upgraded buildings receive the full suite of health and safety measures; current efficiency programs sometimes do minimal work or walk away due to hazards, which leaves vulnerable households behind. Acknowledged high per-unit costs but stressed the equity imperative.

Cornelia Wu (NEEP) announced NEEP's Heating Electrification Workshop October 20–22, with Day Zero on Monday, October 20, 1–4 p.m., for the full Collaborative and subcommittee meetings. Said they're exploring hybrid tech but can't promise yet; Day Zero has no fee and a calendar hold will be sent.

Jason Kliwinski (Senior Energy Code Researcher for Rutgers) thanked BPU and NEEP for co-facilitation and Rob from DCA for the rehab-code overview. Said transcripts will be posted to the Collaborative website, and encouraged sign-ups for working groups.

ZOOM Chat Discussion Notes

Dragana Thibault (NEEP): Guiding principles of the NJ ECC:

<https://njenergycodecollaborative.org/about/>

Transcript from previous subcommittee meeting:

https://njenergycodecollaborative.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/2025-05-08-NJ-ECC-Existing-Buildings-and-Retrofits_meeting-notes.pdf

Melissa Miles (NJEJA): What's the time line for final draft or publication of the matrix?

Jennifer Senick (Rutgers): Nicole - do you have specific ideas to contribute? Would love that!!!

Nicole Miller (MMM Consulting): You know me! Of course I do. Namely, outreach directly to local contractors with training incentives at places where they congregate (such as Home Depot, Lowes, plumbing supply stores, etc.), simple to understand explanations for both contractors and customers available online and through a social media push (funded by utilities), and partnerships with local CBOs to set up "hubs" designed to help residents vet contractors and review available resources from different agencies. Also, there should be some shared tool that homeowners have access to where they can input the number of rooms, square footage and energy usage data (perhaps the same data the contractor would use to create their plan) to suggest the kinds of energy updates that would be appropriate for them and the incentives they



would be eligible for. This tool could also be managed with a guide at the CBO "hub". Happy to chat to refine or clarify.

Dragana Thibault (NEEP): Working group sign-up: <https://padlet.com/dthibault6/nj-ecc-existing-buildings-retrofits-subcommittee-working-gro-dmtq08kswc1k2lj>

Jennifer Senick (Rutgers): We have an in-person meeting opportunity at NEEP's Heating Electrification Conference in Princeton, NJ - October 20?

Robert Austin (NJ DCA): https://www.nj.gov/dca/codes/publications/pdf_ucc/Rehab_kit.pdf

..., the Rehab Code is based on four fundamental principles:

1. "Now is not the perfect time." Contrary to traditional code enforcement in existing buildings, the Rehab Code works on the general premise that the point at which a building owner undertakes a project to improve a building is not the perfect time to require additional work.
2. "Leave it no less safe." No building should be less safe after a project is undertaken than it was before the project began.
3. Predictability. A building owner should be able to predict the scope and cost of a project before the project begins. Requirements should be clear and should be known.
4. Proportionality. The code requirements for a building project should be in proportion to the planned work. A Rehab Code should not be so stringent as to discourage the incremental improvement of buildings.

Jennifer Senick (Rutgers): The DOE RECI (incentive-based BPS) is a good answer to this concern, no? Nick? A perspective to manage improvements to buildings over time w/ incentives that follow the life cycle of the building/equipment? BPS = Building Performance Standard

Nicholas Kikis (NJAA): Yes, I think those types of incentive-based approaches are a good framework and should be foundational.

Jennifer Senick (Rutgers): We are working on an incentive based BPS.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

AIA – American Institute of Architects

ASHRAE – American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers

BPS – Building Performance Standard(s)

BPU (NJBPU) – New Jersey Board of Public Utilities

CBO – Community-Based Organization

CEP (NJCEP) – New Jersey Clean Energy Program



CUPR – Center for Urban Policy Research (Rutgers)
DCA (NJDC) – New Jersey Department of Community Affairs
DOE – U.S. Department of Energy
EDA (NJEDA) – New Jersey Economic Development Authority
EDGE – EDGE Consulting
ICC – International Code Council
IEBC – International Existing Building Code
IECC – International Energy Conservation Code
IRC – International Residential Code
LEED – Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design
MMM – MMM Consulting
NEEP – Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnerships
NJECC – New Jersey Energy Code Collaborative
NJEJA – New Jersey Environmental Justice Alliance
NJAA – New Jersey Apartment Association
NJBA – New Jersey Builders Association
NJHMFA – New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency
NJIT – New Jersey Institute of Technology
NJNG – New Jersey Natural Gas
PAC – Project Advisory Committee
RECI – Resilient & Efficient Codes Implementation (DOE)
TRC – TRC Companies
UCC – Uniform Construction Code
WELL AP – WELL Accredited Professional
ZERH – Zero Energy Ready Homes