

November 9, 2015

Joan Lovely, Chair
Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight
State House, Room 413-A, Boston, MA 02133

Peter Kocot, Chair
Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight
State House, Room 22, Boston, MA 02133

Re: Joint Testimony in Opposition of S. 1709, An Act to reduce energy burdens and increase competitiveness in the Commonwealth

Dear Chairs Lovely and Kocot, and Honorable Members of the Committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to voice our concerns regarding S.1709, An Act to reduce energy burdens and increase competitiveness in the Commonwealth.

The undersigned organizations strongly oppose S.1709. We believe it would take away an important tool from cities and towns throughout the Commonwealth to manage their energy costs and promote more energy efficient, resilient buildings in their communities by repealing the optional stretch energy code. It is particularly ironic that this legislation would be under consideration just after Massachusetts was recognized by the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE) as number one in energy efficiency among all fifty states, for the fifth year in a row.¹ An important factor in our high rating was our residential and commercial stretch building energy codes.²

Over 150 communities have adopted the stretch code since 2009, demonstrating the value that communities place on this voluntary tool to reduce their collective energy consumption and carbon footprint. Yet this bill would prevent communities from voluntarily taking measures to help their residents and businesses manage their energy costs and promote more resilient, energy efficient buildings. S.1709 explicitly forbids any further regulations on top of the state building codes:

“Section 98. The board of selectmen in a town or the mayor in a city may recommend to the board the adoption of rules and regulations imposing more restrictive standards than those established by the state building code for construction, alteration, repair, demolition, and removal in such a city or town. **Such restrictive standards cannot apply to those provisions of the state building code that are based upon the International Energy Conservation Code.**”

The previous Massachusetts stretch code earned national accolades when first adopted, including recognition from the U.S. Department of Energy in 2010 with the Jeffrey Johnson Award for Excellence in the Advancement of Building Energy Codes and Performance. As an integral part of the Green Communities program, the stretch code has yielded municipal savings of \$2.2 million and 173,000 CO₂e in emissions reductions.³

¹ <http://aceee.org/press/2015/10/aceee-state-scorecard-massachusetts>

² <http://database.aceee.org/state/massachusetts>

³ EEA, GWSA Report, 2014: <http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/eea/gwsa/ma-gwsa-5yr-progress-report-1-6-14.pdf>

For these reasons we urge the Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight to reject S. 1709. The stretch energy code is a proven tool to advance energy efficiency in in Massachusetts and to reach our emission reduction goals. Any legislation that would prevent the stretch energy code from being implemented should be opposed.

Respectfully yours,

Josh Craft
Program Director
Environmental League of Massachusetts



Environmental League of Massachusetts

Emily Norton
Massachusetts Sierra Club
Chapter Director



Amy E. Boyd
Senior Attorney
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Grey Lee
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