

**RESOLUTION OF THE WARD 3 DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE IN SUPPORT
OF THE CLEAN ENERGY DC BUILDING CODE AMENDMENT ACT OF 2021
(B24-420) AND RECOMMENDING STRENGTHENING AMENDMENTS**

Passed on 2/7/2022

As stated by Councilmember Mary Cheh in sending the Clean Energy DC Building Code Amendment Act of 2021 to the Secretary of the DC Council: “The fight to arrest climate change is the single most important environmental issue of our time, with extraordinary implications for public health.”

As explained below, the Clean Energy DC Building Code Amendment Act of 2021 (B24-420) <https://lms.dccouncil.us/downloads/LIMS/47959/Introduction/B24-0420-Introduction.pdf> now before the Council, would mitigate climate change by establishing mandatory net-zero energy standards, starting in 2026, for new “commercial” buildings, including government buildings and multi-family residences over three stories.

In 2018, the District government set an aspirational goal of the city’s achieving carbon neutrality by 2050. Pursuant to this goal, the District’s Clean Energy DC Plan (Plan) set the framework for achieving this goal. https://doee.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/ddoe/page_content/attachments/Clean%20Energy%20DC%20-%20Full%20Report_0.pdf

Because buildings account for over 70% of greenhouse gas emissions in the District, reducing and, over time, eliminating greenhouse gas emissions from both existing buildings and new construction is among the essential elements of the Plan.

“Building codes are the single most powerful tool that cities have at their disposal to require higher levels of building performance.” (Plan, page 65). A key component of the Plan is the phased adaptation of net-zero codes for new construction between 2021 and, at the latest, making them mandatory by 2026.

Building codes are updated every few years to increasingly stringent standards. Like many cities, the District’s building code often adopts and builds upon the standards of the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE). When new standards are adopted, it takes several years before a new building planned and permitted to these standards gets completely built and goes into operation.

Currently, Appendix Z of the District’s Building Code (“Net-Zero Energy Compliance Path”) contains voluntary standards for building net-zero energy buildings <https://eservices.d cra .dc.gov/DocumentManagementSystem/Home/retrieve?id=2017%20DC%20Energy%20Code.pdf> (pages C-225 through C-228). Appendix Z applies to “commercial” buildings which includes government buildings and multi-family residences over three stories.

The Clean Energy DC Building Code Amendment Act of 2021 (B24-420) <https://lims.dccouncil.us/downloads/LIMS/47959/Introduction/B24-0420-Introduction.pdf> (the bill), would amend the Green Building Act of 2006, D.C. Official Code § 6-1451.01 et seq., to codify the net-zero standards of Appendix Z in 2026 (making the standards mandatory instead of voluntary) unless by January 1, 2026, the Mayor has adopted equivalent final regulations. The mandatory energy efficiency standards would not apply to buildings which had already received permits prior to January 1, 2026.

Appendix Z defines a “net-zero energy building” as “[A] highly energy-efficient building that produces on-site, or procures through the construction of new renewable energy generation, enough energy to meet or exceed the annual energy consumption of its operations.”

While building to net-zero standards generally costs more up front, over time these buildings save substantial funds in operating costs.

Technology for building net-zero energy buildings already exists and such buildings are already being built. The District has recently built two schools to net-zero energy standards. Additionally, a school in Arlington built to net-zero energy standards saved roughly \$100,000 in operating costs in its first year of existence.

Therefore, it is hereby resolved by the Ward Three Democratic Committee of the District of Columbia (Committee):

1. That the Committee supports the goal of the Clean Energy DC Building Code Amendment Act of 2021 as proposed to codify Appendix Z unless the Mayor adopts equivalent regulations and calls on the Council to pass the bill without delay, but would recommend that the Council amend the bill to accelerate timelines;
2. That the Committee supports amending the bill to adopt a net-zero “commercial” building code by 2024;
3. That the Committee supports amending the bill to require that all new government building construction be built to net-zero energy standards immediately; and
4. That the Committee authorizes the Chair of the Ward 3 Democratic Committee or his designees to take all reasonable actions to implement this resolution.

Passed by:

THE WARD 3 DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE