



About Us

New Buildings Institute (NBI) is a trusted, independent nonprofit organization with a mission to push for better buildings that achieve zero energy, zero carbon, and beyond—through research, policy, guidance, and market transformation—to protect people and the planet.

For more than 20 years, NBI has worked collaboratively with industry market players—governments, utilities, energy efficiency advocates and building professionals—to promote advanced design practices, innovative technologies, public policies and programs that improve energy efficiency.

Delivering Results

NBI is a results-driven organization working to find strategic points of leverage that will deliver the best outcomes for improving building efficiency.

ZNE Research Studies Identify Trends. NBI's groundbreaking research on trends, features, energy performance and tally of zero net energy buildings (ZNE) in North America offers the most comprehensive view of the landscape for ZNE. NBI has also worked nationally with industry leaders to study the costs and technical feasibility of zero net energy buildings, including a financial study for the District of Columbia.

Online Database Profiles Buildings. Building on our ZNE research, NBI continues to track and verify ZNE status, now tracking 640 verified and emerging projects, a 700% increase over the initial count in 2012. Case studies on many of these projects and other ultra-low energy buildings can be found in NBI's Getting to Zero Buildings Database.

California ZNE Early Adopter Network and Workshops. NBI staff has been working to increase market acceptance and participation in California's zero net energy goals. We helped formalize an Early Adopter Network and, in partnership with local utilities and the California Public Utilities Commission, we train stakeholders on ZNE design and project planning providing educational resources, toolkits, case studies and a regular *ZNE Action Bulletin*.

Getting to Zero Convenings. NBI's findings on zero net energy progress have been presented by staff and cited by others at dozens of conferences and workshops. NBI's zero net energy webinar series touches over 3,000 designers, owners and advocates per year; it remains the best intelligence on important aspects of ZNE. In 2019, NBI held the fourth Getting to Zero Forum, where more than 600 participants gathered to learn about and collaborate on ZNE. The fifth Getting To Zero Forum will take place in March 2021 in New York City.

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A Focus on Outcome-Based Performance. For nearly a decade, NBI has been a leading advocate for measured energy performance in buildings. This overarching focus on energy use data means that high performance buildings will actually save energy and reduce carbon emissions rather than relying primarily on predictive models. NBI has been working with the National Institute of Building Sciences to establish a clear path to transition the industry to more common reliance on measured, outcome-based performance for determining a building's efficiency in operation.

Deep Energy Retrofits Upgrade Existing Building Efficiency. Realizing deep energy savings in existing buildings has long been a focus of NBI. A report on the potential for small commercial retrofits produced in partnership with the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Preservation Green Lab estimates that investments in energy conservation could generate \$30 billion in annual energy cost savings, improving the financial performance of millions of small businesses. These early research findings contributed to a U.S. Department of Energy investment of \$10 million for six deep energy efficiency projects to reduce carbon pollution and energy bills in small commercial buildings.

Public Buildings Portfolio Management. With funding from NEEA, NBI launched a Public Buildings Portfolio Management project with the cities of Tacoma and Boise. The project looks at comprehensive, portfolio-wide building improvement policies and uses measured energy data to analyze consumption of existing building stock. This approach has been expanded nationally to additional cities through a partnership with the U.S. Department of Energy.

Setting Higher Standards in Energy Codes. Energy codes set the minimum standard for efficiency levels of the country's building stock. In recent code development cycles, major model energy codes have seen substantial increases in efficiency stringency due to efforts by NBI and our partners. Working together, we were able to rewrite sections of the 2021 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) to improve the next version of this code for both residential and commercial building projects. These changes—representing the second largest efficiency gains in the IECC's last decade—are estimated to result in at least 10% better efficiency for decades to come and will mitigate carbon emissions from buildings.

Supporting Adoption of Advanced Energy Codes Locally. NBI supports local jurisdictions in the adoption of higher stringency energy codes. We supported the State of Vermont in development of technical measures, evaluation approaches and implementation plans for its upcoming code cycles. Similarly, NBI has supported the Energy Trust of Oregon on development of code roadmaps for the state. In California, NBI participated on a team of technical and policy experts to conduct a "top-down" code study that sets energy savings targets for code updates based on state energy policy goals and provides focus for strategies and tactics to accelerate market transformation to fast-track code readiness. Most recently, staff worked with NYSERDA to develop New York state's first-ever stretch code.

“With the assistance of NBI’s network of energy and facilitation experts, we have been able to help identify expertise to help train state building professionals. The resources shared through NBI’s extensive energy and ZNE research efforts are a great benefit to not only California building professionals, but across the country.”

Dan Burgoyne, Sustainability Manager,
State of California Department of General
Services, Office of Sustainability

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