

*Sent via Electronic Mail*

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Building Code Commission  
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**Re: Proposed Rule for the Rhode Island Energy Conservation Code**

Dear Ms. Enos,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Building Code Commission's proposed rule, "RISBC-8 State of Rhode Island Energy Conservation Code" (510-RICR-00-00-8). We support Rhode Island's decision to move forward to the 2015 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) from the State's current code, which is based on the 2012 IECC.

However, we are concerned that the proposed rule: 1) may provide an exemption for alterations and additions to existing buildings; and 2) retains the prescriptive envelope tables from the 2012 IECC instead of adopting the R-value and U-factor tables from the 2015 IECC. We believe these may be simple mistakes, but ones that would result in a much weaker energy code compared to requirements under the 2015 IECC. Each concern is detailed separately below.

**1. Alterations and Additions to Existing Buildings:**

The language under section 8.5 (page 7), which reads, "Delete without substitute C401.2.1 Application to existing buildings," appears to be legacy language from when the 2012 IECC was used as the base code. Section C401.2.1 of the 2012 IECC applies the energy code requirements to existing buildings. Therefore, the legacy language exempted existing buildings from compliance. However, Section C401.2.1 in the 2015 IECC relates to replacement fenestration products.

Regarding the proposed rule, we note that the application of the IECC requirements to alterations and additions in existing buildings is a well-established practice endorsed by most every state and has been in the model codes since 2000. In addition, State law directs that the energy conservation code shall meet or exceed recent national model codes and the State shall develop a plan to achieve 90% compliance with such code for "new and renovated residential and commercial building space in the State." (See R.I. Gen Laws, section 23-27.3-100.1.5.4). Clearly, exempting existing buildings would contravene this statute and significantly weaken the code. **Therefore, we recommend that the sentence, "Delete without substitute C401.2.1 Application to existing buildings," be removed from the proposed rule in order to promote building energy efficiency and comply with State law.**

## 2. Opaque Thermal Envelope Requirements:

Although the documentation accompanying the proposed rule states that Rhode Island's proposed new code is based on the 2015 IECC, the Commission's proposed rule does not update the prescriptive Tables C402.1.4 (Opaque Thermal Envelope Assembly Requirements) and C402.1.3 (Opaque Thermal Envelope Requirements) to match the 2015 IECC requirements (see pages 8 & 9 of the proposed rule). The 2012 and 2015 versions of these tables are largely the same, except with respect to the requirements for roof insulation entirely above deck (IEAD) and several new and modified footnotes. Perhaps the most important difference between the two versions is that the IEAD standards were increased from R-25 to R-30 under the 2015 IECC for the Climate Zone applicable to the State. However, none of these changes are reflected in the proposed rule. The weaker R-value for commercial low slope roofs that would result from this mistake would undermine the energy-efficiency benefits of moving from the 2012 to the 2015 IECC and could create an obstacle to using COMcheck as a compliance mechanism.

One reason we believe the weaker roof R-values and the missing footnotes under the proposed rule may be a mistake is because there is no explanation of this deviation from the 2015 IECC in the Building Code Commission's November 2018 rulemaking document, "Analysis of RI State Building Codes; Building Code Standards Committee," which contains a description of the Rhode Island-specific proposed amendments to the 2015 IECC. See <http://www.ribcc.ri.gov/documents/bcsc/DRAFT%20Building%20Code%20Analysis%2011.26.18.pdf>.

**Therefore, we recommend the proposed rule be modified to reflect the adoption of Tables C402.1.4 and C402.1.3 as published in the 2015 IECC. This recommendation includes modifying the U-factors and R-values contained within said Tables to match the values published in the 2015 IECC. See example of recommended modifications below:**

Climate Zone	5	
	All other	R Group
Roofs		
Insulation Entirely Above Deck [U-Factor]	<del>U-0.039</del> U-0.032	<del>U-0.039</del> U-0.032
Insulation Entirely Above Deck [R-value]	<del>R-25ei</del> R-30ci	<del>R-25ei</del> R-30ci

Thank you for this opportunity to comment. Please contact me with any questions at (703) 224-2289; [jkoscher@pima.org](mailto:jkoscher@pima.org).

Sincerely,



Justin Koscher  
President